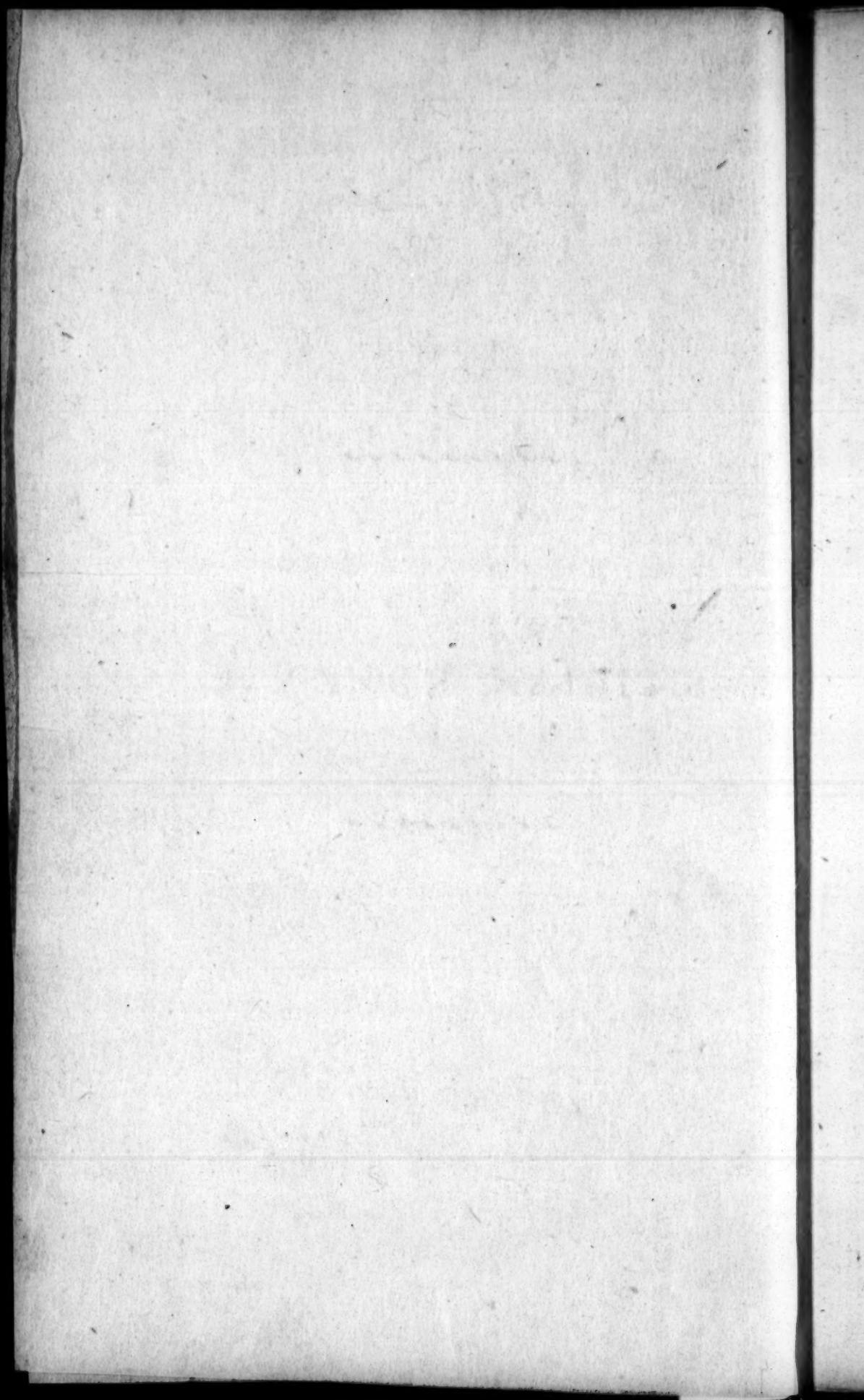


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SICILIAN ROMANCE.



A *Shillingham 1814.*

SICILIAN ROMANCE.

BY

ANN RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF THE

ROMANCE OF THE FOREST,

CASTLES OF ATHLIN AND DUNBAYNE,

&c. &c.

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Third Edition.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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"I could a Tale unfold."

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## SICILIAN ROMANCE.

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### CHAPTER VII.

**T**OWARDS the close of day Madame de Menon arrived at a small village situated among the mountains, where she purposed to pass the night. The evening was remarkably fine, and the romantic beauty of the surrounding scenery invited her to walk. She followed the windings of a stream, which was lost at some distance amongst luxuriant groves of chestnut. The rich colouring of evening glowed through the dark foliage, which spreading a pensive gloom around, offered a scene congenial to the present temper of her mind, and she entered the shades. Her thoughts, affected by the

surrounding objects, gradually sunk into a pleasing and complacent melancholy, and she was insensibly led on. She still followed the course of the stream to where the deep shades retired, and the scene again opening to day, yielded to her a view so various and sublime, that she paused in thrilling and delightful wonder. A group of wild and grotesque rocks rose in a semicircular form, and their fantastic shapes exhibited Nature in her most sublime and striking attitudes. Here her vast magnificence elevated the mind of the beholder to enthusiasm. Fancy caught the thrilling sensation, and at her touch the towering steeps became shaded with unreal glooms; the caves more darkly frowned—the projecting cliffs assumed a more terrific aspect, and the wild overhanging shrubs waved to the gale in deeper murmurs. The scene inspired Madame with reverential awe, and her thoughts involuntarily rose, “from Nature up to Nature’s God.” The last dying



ing gleams of day tinted the rocks and shone upon the waters, which retired through a rugged channel, and were lost afar among the receding cliffs. While she listened to their distant murmur, a voice of liquid and melodious sweetness arose from among the rocks; it sung an air, whose melancholy expression awakened all her attention, and captivated her heart. The tones swelled and died faintly away among the clear, yet languishing echoes which the rocks repeated with an effect like that of enchantment. Madame looked around in search of the sweet warbler, and observed at some distance a peasant girl seated on a small projection of the rock, overshadowed by drooping sycamores. She moved slowly towards the spot, which she had almost reached, when the sound of her steps startled and silenced the syren, who, on perceiving a stranger, arose in an attitude to depart. The voice of Madame arrested her, and she approach-

ed. Language cannot paint the sensation of Madame, when, in the disguise of a peasant girl, she distinguished the features of Julia, whose eyes lighted up with sudden recollection, and who sunk into her arms, overcome with joy. When their first emotions were subsided, and Julia had received answers to her inquiries concerning Ferdinand and Emilia, she led Madame to the place of her concealment. This was a solitary cottage, in a close valley surrounded by mountains, whose cliffs appeared wholly inaccessible to mortal foot. The deep solitude of the scene dissipated at once Madame's wonder that Julia had so long remained undiscovered, and excited surprise how she had been able to explore a spot thus deeply sequestered; but Madame observed with extreme concern, that the countenance of Julia no longer wore the smile of health and gaiety. Her fine features had received the impressions not only of melancholy, but

but of grief. Madame sighed as she gazed, and read too plainly the cause of the change. Julia understood that sigh, and answered it with her tears. She pressed the hand of Madame in mournful silence to her lips, and her cheeks were suffused with a crimson glow. At length, recovering herself, "I have much, my dear Madam, to tell," said she, "and much to explain, ere you will admit me again to that esteem of which I was once so justly proud. I had no resource from misery, but in flight; and of that I could not make you a confidant, without meanly involving you in its disgrace."—"Say no more, my love, on the subject," replied Madame; "with respect to myself, I admired your conduct, and felt severely for your situation. Rather let me hear by what means you effected your escape, and what has since befallen you."—Julia paused a moment, as if to stifle her rising emotion, and then commenced her narrative.



“You are already acquainted with the secret of that night, so fatal to my peace. I recall the remembrance of it with an anguish which I cannot conceal; and why should I wish its concealment, since I mourn for one, whose noble qualities justified all my admiration, and deserved more than my feeble praise can bestow; the idea of whom will be the last to linger in my mind till death shuts up the painful scene.” Her voice trembled, and she paused. After a few moments she resumed her tale. “I will spare myself the pain of recurring to scenes with which you are not unacquainted, and proceed to those which more immediately attract your interest. Caterina, my faithful servant, you know, attended me in my confinement; to her kindness I owe my escape. She obtained from her lover, a servant in the castle, that assistance which gave me liberty. One night when Carlo, who had been appointed my guard, was asleep, Nicolo

crept



crept into his chamber, and stole from him the keys of my prison. He had previously procured a ladder of ropes. Oh ! I can never forget my emotions, when in the dead hour of that night, which was meant to precede the day of my sacrifice, I heard the door of my prison unlock, and found myself half at liberty ! My trembling limbs with difficulty supported me as I followed Caterina to the saloon, the windows of which being low and near to the terrace, suited our purpose. To the terrace we easily got, where Nicolo awaited us with the rope ladder. He fastened it to the ground ; and having climbed to the top of the parapet, quickly slid down on the other side. There he held it while we ascended and descended ; and I soon breathed the air of freedom again. But the apprehension of being retaken was still too powerful to permit a full enjoyment of my escape. It was my plan to proceed to the place of my

faithful Caterina's nativity, where she had assured me I might find a safe asylum in the cottage of her parents, from whom, as they had never seen me, I might conceal my birth. This place, she said, was entirely unknown to the marquis, who had hired her at Naples only a few months before, without any inquiries concerning her family. She had informed me that the village was many leagues distant from the castle, but that she was very well acquainted with the road. At the foot of the walls we left Nicolo, who returned to the castle to prevent suspicion, but with an intention to leave it at a less dangerous time, and repair to Farrini to his good Caterina. I parted from him with many thanks, and gave him a small diamond cross, which, for that purpose, I had taken from the jewels sent to me for wedding ornaments."

## CHAPTER VIII.

"**A**BOUT a quarter of a league from the walls we stopped, and I assumed the habit in which you now see me. My own dress was fastened to some heavy stones, and Caterina threw it into the stream, near the almond grove, whose murmurings you have so often admired. The fatigue and hardship I endured in this journey, performed almost wholly on foot, at any other time would have overcome me; but my mind was so occupied by the danger I was avoiding, that these lesser evils were disregarded. We arrived in safety at the cottage, which stood at a little distance from the village of Farrini, and were received by Caterina's parents with some surprise and more kindness. I soon perceived it would be useless, and even dangerous, to attempt to preserve the character I personated. In the eyes of Caterina's mother I read a degree of



surprise and admiration, which declared she believed me to be of superior rank; I, therefore, thought it more prudent to win her fidelity by entrusting her with my secret, than, by endeavouring to conceal it, leave it to be discovered by her curiosity or discernment. Accordingly I made known my quality and my distress, and received strong assurances of assistance and attachment. For further security, I removed to this sequestered spot. The cottage we are now in belongs to a sister of Caterina, upon whose faithfulness I have been hitherto fully justified in relying. But I am not even here secure from apprehension, since for several days past horsemen of a suspicious appearance have been observed near Marcy, which is only half a league from hence."

Here Julia closed her narration, to which Madame had listened with a mixture of surprise and pity, which her eyes sufficiently discovered. The last circumstance



stance of the narrative seriously alarmed her. She acquainted Julia with the pursuit which the duke had undertaken ; and she did not hesitate to believe it a party of his people whom Julia had described. Madame, therefore, earnestly advised her to quit her present situation, and to accompany her in disguise to the monastery of St. Augustin, where she would find a secure retreat ; because, even if her place of refuge should be discovered, the superior authority of the church would protect her. Julia accepted the proposal with much joy. As it was necessary that Madame should sleep at the village where she had left her servants and horses, it was agreed that at break of day she should return to the cottage, where Julia would await her. Madame took an affectionate leave of Julia, whose heart, in spite of reason, sunk when she saw her depart, though but for the necessary interval of repose.

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At the dawn of day Madame arose. Her servants, who were hired for the journey, were strangers to Julia, from them, therefore, she had nothing to apprehend. She reached the cottage before sun-rise, having left the people at some little distance. Her heart foreboded evil, when, on knocking at the door, no answer was returned. She knocked again, and still all was silent. Through the casement she could discover no object, amidst the grey obscurity of the dawn. She now opened the door, and to her inexpressible surprise and distress, found the cottage empty. She proceeded to a small inner room, where lay a part of Julia's apparel. The bed had no appearance of having been slept in, and every moment served to heighten and confirm her apprehensions. While she pursued the search, she suddenly heard the trampling of feet at the cottage door, and presently after some people entered. Her fears for Julia now yielded to those for her own safety, and she was undeter-

mined whether to discover herself, or remain in her present situation, when she was relieved from her irresolution by the appearance of Julia.

On the return of the good woman who had accompanied Madame to the village on the preceding night, Julia went to the cottage at Farrini. Her grateful heart would not suffer her to depart without taking leave of her faithful friends, thanking them for their kindness, and informing them of her future prospects. They had prevailed upon her to spend the few intervening hours at this cot, whence she had just risen to meet Madame.

They now hastened to the spot where the horses were stationed, and commenced their journey. For some leagues they travelled in silence and thought, over a wild and picturesque country. The landscape was tinted with rich and variegated hues; and the autumnal lights which streamed upon the hills produced



produced a spirited and beautiful effect upon the scenery. All the glories of the vintage rose to their view: the purple grapes flushed through the dark green of the surrounding foliage, and the prospect glowed with luxuriance.

They now descended into a deep valley, which appeared more like a scene of airy enchantment than reality. Along the bottom flowed a clear majestic stream, whose banks were adorned with thick groves of orange and citron trees. Julia surveyed the scene in silent complacency, but her eye quickly caught an object which changed with instantaneous shock the tone of her feelings. She observed a party of horsemen winding down the side of a hill behind her. Their uncommon speed alarmed her, and she pushed her horse into a gallop. On looking back Madame de Menon clearly perceived they were in pursuit. Soon after the men suddenly appeared from behind a dark grove within a small distance



distance of them ; and upon their nearer approach, Julia, overcome with fatigue and fear, sunk breathless from her horse. She was saved from the ground by one of the pursuers, who caught her in his arms. Madame, with the rest of the party, were quickly overtaken ; and as soon as Julia revived, they were bound, and re-conducted to the hill from whence they had descended. Imagination only can paint the anguish of Julia's mind, when she saw herself thus delivered up to the power of her enemy. Madame, in the surrounding troop, discovered none of the marquis's people, and they were therefore evidently in the hands of the duke. After travelling for some hours, they quitted the main road, and turned into a narrow winding dell, overshadowed by high trees, which almost excluded the light. The gloom of the place inspired terrific images. Julia trembled as she entered ; and her emotion was heightened, when she perceived at some distance,

still

distance, through the long perspective of the trees, a large ruinous mansion. The gloom of the surrounding shades partly concealed it from her view ; but, as she drew near, each forlorn and decaying feature of the fabric was gradually disclosed, and struck upon her heart a horror such as she had never before experienced. The broken battlements, enwreathed with ivy, proclaimed the fallen grandeur of the place, while the shattered vacant window frames exhibited its desolation, and the high grass that overgrew the threshold, seemed to say how long it was since mortal foot had entered. The place appeared fit only for the purposes of violence and destruction : and the unfortunate captives, when they stopped at its gates, felt the full force of its horrors.

They were taken from their horses, and conveyed to an interior part of the building, which, if it had once been a chamber, no longer deserved the name.

Here

Here the guard said they were directed to detain them till the arrival of their lord, who had appointed this the place of rendezvous. He was expected to meet them in a few hours, and these were hours of indescribable torture to Julia and Madame. From the furious passions of the duke, exasperated by frequent disappointment, Julia had every evil to apprehend; and the loneliness of the spot he had chosen, enabled him to perpetrate any designs, however violent. For the first time, she repented that she had left her father's house. Madame wept over her, but comfort she had none to give. The day closed—the duke did not appear, and the fate of Julia yet hung in perilous uncertainty. At length, from a window of the apartment she was in, she distinguished a glimmering of torches among the trees, and presently after the clattering of hoofs convinced her the duke was approaching. Her heart sunk at the sound; and throwing



ing her arms round Madame's neck, she resigned herself to despair. She was soon roused by some men, who came to announce the arrival of their lord. In a few moments the place, which had lately been so silent, echoed with tumult; and a sudden blaze of light illumining the fabric, served to exhibit more forcibly its striking horrors. Julia ran to the window; and in a sort of court below, perceived a group of men dismounting from their horses. The torches shed a partial light; and while she anxiously looked round for the person of the duke, the whole party entered the mansion. She listened to a confused uproar of voices, which sounded from the room beneath, and soon after it sunk into a low murmur, as if some matter of importance was in agitation. For some moments she sat in lingering terror, when she heard footsteps advancing towards the chamber, and a sudden gleam of torch-light flashed upon the walls.

“ Wretched

" Wretched girl ! I have at last secured you !" said a cavalier, who now entered the room. He stopped as he perceived Julia ; and turning to the men who stood without, " Are these," said he, " the fugitives you have taken ? " — " Yes, my lord. " — " Then you have deceived yourselves, and misled me ; this is not my daughter. " These words struck the sudden light of truth and joy upon the heart of Julia, whom terror had before rendered almost lifeless ; and who had not perceived that the person entering was a stranger. Madame now stepped forward, and an explanation ensued, when it appeared that the stranger was the marquis Murani, the father of the fair fugitive whom the duke had before mistaken for Julia.

The appearance and the evident flight of Julia had deceived the banditti employed by this nobleman, into a belief that she was the object of their search, and had occasioned her this unnecessary

sary distress. But the joy she now felt on finding herself thus unexpectedly at liberty, surpassed, if possible, her preceding terrors. The marquis made Madame and Julia all the reparation in his power, by offering immediately to reconduct them to the main road, and to guard them to some place of safety for the night. This offer was eagerly and thankfully accepted; and though faint from distress, fatigue, and want of sustenance, they joyfully remounted their horses, and by torch-light quitted the mansion. After some hours travelling they arrived at a small town, where they procured the accommodation so necessary to their support and repose. Here their guides quitted them to continue their search.

They arose with the dawn, and continued their journey, continually terrified with the apprehension of encountering the duke's people. At noon they arrived at Azulia, from whence the  
monastery,



monastery, or abbey of St. Augustin, was distant only a few miles. Madame wrote to the *Padre Abate*, to whom she was somewhat related, and soon after received an answer very favourable to her wishes. The same evening they repaired to the abbey; where Julia, once more relieved from the fear of pursuit, offered up a prayer of gratitude to heaven, and endeavoured to calm her sorrows by devotion. She was received by the abbot with a sort of paternal affection, and by the nuns with officious kindness. Comforted by these circumstances, and by the tranquil appearance of every thing around her, she retired to rest, and passed the night in peaceful slumbers.

In her present situation she found much novelty to amuse, and much serious matter to interest her mind. Entendered by distress, she easily yielded to the pensive manners of her companions, and to the serene uniformity of a  
monastie

monastic life. She loved to wander through the lonely cloisters, and high-arched aisles, whose long perspectives retired in simple grandeur, diffusing a holy calm around. She found much pleasure in the conversation of the nuns, many of whom were uncommonly amiable, and the dignified sweetness of whose manners formed a charm irresistibly attractive. The soft melancholy impressed upon their countenances portrayed the situation of their minds, and excited in Julia a very interesting mixture of pity and esteem. The affectionate appellation of sister, and all that endearing tenderness which they so well know how to display, and of which they so well understand the effect, they bestowed on Julia, in the hope of winning her to become one of their order.

Soothed by the presence of Madame, the assiduity of the nuns, and by the stillness and sanctity of the place, her mind gradually recovered a degree of  
 compla-

complacency to which it had long been a stranger. But notwithstanding all her efforts, the idea of Hippolitus would at intervals return upon her memory with a force that at once subdued her fortitude, and sunk her in a temporary despair.

Among the holy sisters, Julia distinguished one, the singular fervor of whose devotion, and the pensive air of whose countenance, softened by the languor of illness, attracted her curiosity, and excited a strong degree of pity. The nun, by a sort of sympathy, seemed particularly inclined towards Julia, which she discovered by innumerable acts of kindness, such as the heart can quickly understand and acknowledge, although description can never reach them. In conversation with her, Julia endeavoured, as far as delicacy would permit, to prompt an explanation of that more than common dejection which shaded those features, where beauty, touched by resignation and sublimed by religion, shone



shone forth with mild and lambent lustre.

The duke de Luovo, after having been detained for some weeks by the fever, which his wounds had produced, and his irritated passions had much prolonged, arrived at the castle of Mazzini.

When the marquis saw him return, and recollected the futility of those exertions, by which he had boastfully promised to recover Julia, the violence of his nature spurned the disguise of art, and burst forth in contemptuous impeachment of the valour and discernment of the duke, who soon retorted with equal fury. The consequence might have been fatal, had not the ambition of the marquis subdued the sudden irritation of his inferior passions, and induced him to soften the severity of his accusations, by subsequent concessions. The duke, whose passion for Julia was heightened by the difficulty which opposed it, admitted such concessions

sions as in other circumstances he would have rejected; and thus each, conquered by the predominant passion of the moment, submitted to be the slave of his adversary.

Emilia was at length released from the confinement she had so unjustly suffered. She had now the use of her old apartments, where, solitary and dejected, her hours moved heavily along, embittered by incessant anxiety for Julia, and by regret for the lost society of Madame. The marchioness, whose pleasure suffered a temporary suspense during the present confusion at the castle, exercised the ill-humoured caprice, which disappointment and lassitude inspired, upon her remaining subject. Emilia was condemned to suffer, and to endure without the privilege of complaining. In reviewing the events of the last few weeks, she saw those most dear to her banished, or imprisoned by the secret influence of a woman, every

feature of whose character was exactly opposite to that of the amiable mother she had been appointed to succeed.

The search after Julia still continued, and was still unsuccessful. The astonishment of the marquis increased with his disappointments; for where could Julia, ignorant of the country, and destitute of friends, have possibly found an asylum? He swore with a terrible oath to revenge on her head, whenever she should be found, the trouble and vexation she now caused him. But he agreed with the duke to relinquish for a while the search; till Julia, gaining confidence from the observation of this circumstance, might gradually suppose herself secure from molestation, and thus be induced to emerge from concealment.



## CHAPTER IX.

**M**EANWHILE Julia, sheltered in the obscure recesses of St. Augustin, endeavoured to attain a degree of that tranquillity, which so strikingly characterized the scenes around her. The abbey of St. Augustin was a large magnificent mass of Gothic architecture, whose gloomy battlements, and majestic towers, arose in proud sublimity from amid the darkness of the surrounding shades. It was founded in the twelfth century, and stood a proud monument of monkish superstition and princely munificence. In the times when Italy was agitated by internal commotions, and persecuted by foreign invaders, this edifice afforded an asylum to many noble Italian emigrants, who here consecrated the rest of their days to religion. At their death they enriched the monastery with the treasures which it had enabled them to secure.

The view of this building revived in the mind of the beholder the memory of past ages. The manners and characters which distinguished them arose to his fancy, and through the long lapse of years he discriminated those customs and manners which formed so striking a contrast to the modes of his own times. The rude manners, the boisterous passions, the daring ambition, and the gross indulgencies which formerly characterized the priest, the nobleman, and the sovereign, had now begun to yield to learning—the charms of refined conversation—political intrigue and private artifices. Thus do the scenes of life vary with the predominant passions of mankind, and with the progress of civilization. The dark clouds of prejudice break away before the sun of science, and gradually dissolving, leave the brightening hemisphere to the influence of his beams. But through the present scene appeared only a few scattered rays,

rays, which served to shew more forcibly the vast and heavy masses that concealed the form of truth. Here prejudice, not reason, suspended the influence of the passions; and scholastic learning, mysterious philosophy, and crafty sanctity, supplied the place of wisdom, simplicity, and pure devotion.

At the abbey, solitude and stillness conspired with the solemn aspect of the pile, to impress the mind with religious awe. The dim glass of the high-arched windows, stained with the colouring of monkish fictions, and shaded by the thick trees that environed the edifice, spread around a sacred gloom, which inspired the beholder with congenial feelings.

As Julia mused through the walks, and surveyed this vast monument of barbarous superstition, it brought to her recollection an ode which she often repeated with melancholy pleasure, as the composition of Hippolitus.



## SUPERSTITION.

## AN ODE.

HIGH mid Alverna's awful steeps,  
 Eternal shades, and silence dwell,  
 Save, when the gale resounding sweeps,  
 Sad strains are faintly heard to swell:

Enthron'd amid the wild impending rocks,  
 Involv'd in clouds, and brooding future woe,  
 The demon Superstition Nature shocks,  
 And waves her sceptre o'er the world below.

Around her throne, amid the mingling glooms,  
 Wild—hideous forms are slowly seen to glide;  
 She bids them fly to shade earth's brightest blooms,  
 And spread the blast of Desolation wide.

See! in the darkened air their fiery course!  
 The sweeping ruin settles o'er the land,  
 Terror leads on their steps with madd'ning force,  
 And Death and Vengeance close the ghastly band!

Mark the purple streams that flow!  
 Mark the deep empassioned woe!  
 Frantic Fury's dying groan!  
 Virtue's sigh, and Sorrow's moan!

Wide—wide the phantoms swell the loaded air  
 With shrieks of anguish—madness and despair!

Cease

Cease your ruin! spectres dire!  
 Cease your wild terrific sway!  
 Turn your steps—and check your ire,  
 Yield to peace the mourning day!

She wept to the memory of times past, and there was a romantic sadness in her feelings, luxurious and indefinable. Madame behaved to Julia with the tenderest affection, and endeavoured to withdraw her thoughts from their mournful subject, by promoting that taste for literature and music, which was so suitable to the powers of her mind.

But an object seriously interesting now obtained that regard, which those of mere amusement failed to attract. Her favourite nun, for whom her love and esteem daily increased, seemed declining under the pressure of a secret grief. Julia was deeply affected with her situation, and though she was not empowered to administer consolation to her sorrows, she endeavoured to mitigate the sufferings of illness. She nursed

her with unremitting care, and seemed to seize with avidity the temporary opportunity of escaping from herself. The nun appeared perfectly reconciled to her fate, and exhibited during her illness so much sweetness, patience, and resignation, as affected all around her with pity and love. Her angelic mildness, and steady fortitude, characterized the beatification of a saint, rather than the death of a mortal. Julia watched every turn of her disorder with the utmost solicitude, and her care was at length rewarded by the amendment of Cornelia. Her health gradually improved, and she attributed this circumstance to the assiduity and tenderness of her young friend, to whom her heart now expanded in warm and unrestrained affection. At length Julia ventured to solicit what she had so long and so earnestly wished for, and Cornelia unfolded the history of her sorrows.

“ Of



"Of the life which your care has prolonged," said she, "it is but just that you should know the events; though those events are neither new, or striking, and possess little power of interesting persons unconnected with them. To me they have, however, been unexpectedly dreadful in effect, and my heart assures me, that to you they will not be indifferent.

"I am the unfortunate descendant of an ancient and illustrious Italian family. In early childhood I was deprived of a mother's care, but the tenderness of my surviving parent made her loss, as to my welfare, almost unfelt. Suffer me here to do justice to the character of my noble father. He united in an eminent degree, the mild virtues of social life, with the firm unbending qualities of the noble Romans, his ancestors, from whom he was proud to trace his descent. Their merit, indeed, continually dwelt on his tongue, and their actions he was always

endeavouring to imitate, as far as was consistent with the character of his times, and with the limited sphere in which he moved. The recollection of his virtue elevates my mind, and fills my heart with a noble pride, which even the cold walls of a monastery have not been able to subdue.

“ My father’s fortune was unsuitable to his rank. That his son might hereafter be enabled to support the dignity of his family, it was necessary for me to assume the veil. Alas ! that heart was unfit to be offered at an heavenly shrine, which was already devoted to an earthly object. My affections had long been engaged by the younger son of a neighbouring nobleman, whose character and accomplishments attracted my early love, and confirmed my latest esteem. Our families were intimate, and our youthful intercourse occasioned an attachment, which strengthened and expanded with our years. He solicited me of my father,

father,

father, but there appeared an insuperable barrier to our union. The family of my lover laboured under a circumstance of similar distress with that of my own—it was noble—but poor! My father, who was ignorant of the strength of my affection, and who considered a marriage formed in poverty as destructive to happiness, prohibited his suit.

“Touched with chagrin and disappointment, he immediately entered into the service of his Neapolitan majesty, and sought in the tumultuous scenes of glory, a refuge from the pangs of disappointed passion.

“To me, whose hours moved in one round of dull uniformity—who had no pursuit to interest—no variety to animate my drooping spirits—to me the effort of forgetfulness was ineffectual. The loved idea of Angelo still rose upon my fancy, and its powers of captivation, heightened by absence, and, perhaps, even by despair, pursued me



with incessant grief. I concealed in silence the anguish that preyed upon my heart, and resigned myself a willing victim to monastic austerity. But I was now threatened with a new evil, terrible and unexpected. I was so unfortunate as to attract the admiration of the marquis Marinelli, and he applied to my father. He was illustrious at once in birth and fortune, and his visits could only be unwelcome to me. Dreadful was the moment in which my father disclosed to me the proposal. My distress, which I vainly endeavoured to command, discovered the exact situation of my heart, and my father was affected.

“After a long and awful pause, he generously released me from my sufferings, by leaving it to my choice to accept the marquis, or to assume the veil. I fell at his feet, overcome by the noble disinterestedness of his conduct, and instantly accepted the latter.

“This

"This affair removed entirely the disguise with which I had hitherto guarded my heart ;—my brother—my generous brother ! learned the true state of its affections. He saw the grief which preyed upon my health ; he observed it to my father, and he nobly—oh, how nobly ! to restore my happiness, desired to resign a part of the estate which had already descended to him in right of his mother.

"Alas ! Hippolitus," continued Cornelia, deeply sighing, "thy virtues deserved a better fate."

"Hippolitus !" said Julia, in a tremulous accent, "Hippolitus, count de Vereza !" "The same," replied the nun, in a tone of surprize. Julia was speechless ; tears, however, came to her relief. The astonishment of Cornelia for some moments surpassed expression ; at length a gleam of recollection crossed her mind, and she too well understood the scene before her. Julia, after some time revived, when Cornelia tenderly approach-

approaching her, "Do I then embrace my sister!" said she, "United in sentiment, are we also united in misfortune?" Julia answered with her sighs, and their tears flowed in mournful sympathy together. At length Cornelia resumed her narrative.

"My father, struck with the conduct of Hippolitus, paused upon the offer. The alteration in my health was too obvious to escape his notice; the conflict between pride and parental tenderness held him for some time in indecision, but the latter finally subdued every opposing feeling, and he yielded his consent to my marriage with Angelo. The sudden transition from grief to joy was almost too much for my feeble frame; judge then what must have been the effect of the dreadful reverse, when the news arrived, that Angelo had fallen in a foreign engagement! Let me obliterate, if possible, the impression of sensations so dreadful. The sufferings of my



my brother, whose generous heart could so finely feel for another's woe, were on this occasion inferior only to my own.

After the first excess of my grief was subsided, I desired to retire from a world which had tempted me only with illusive visions of happiness, and to remove from those scenes which prompted recollection, and perpetuated my distress. My father applauded my resolution, and I immediately was admitted a novice into this monastery, with the superior of which my father had in his youth been acquainted.

"At the expiration of the year I received the veil. Oh! I well remember with what perfect resignation, with what comfortable complacency I took those vows which bound me to a life of retirement, and religious rest.

"The high importance of the moment, the solemnity of the ceremony, the sacred glooms which surrounded me, and the chilling silence that prevailed when

I ut-

I uttered the irrevocable vow—all conspired to impress my imagination, and to raise my views to heaven. When I knelt at the altar, the sacred flame of pure devotion glowed in my heart, and elevated my soul to sublimity. The world and all its recollections faded from my mind, and left it to the influence of a serene and holy enthusiasm which no words can describe.

“Soon after my noviciation, I had the misfortune to lose my dear father. In the tranquillity of this monastery, however, in the soothing kindness of my companions, and in devotional exercises, my sorrows found relief, and the sting of grief was blunted. My repose was of short continuance. A circumstance occurred that renewed the misery, which can now never quit me but in the grave, to which I look with no fearful apprehension, but as a refuge from calamity, trusting that the Power who has seen good to afflict me, will pardon the imperfectness

perfectness of my devotion, and the too frequent wandering of my thoughts to the object once so dear to me."

"As she spoke she raised her eyes, which beamed with truth and meek assurance, to heaven; and the fine devotional suffusion of her countenance seemed to characterize the beauty of an inspired saint.

"One day, Oh! never shall I forget it, I went as usual to the confessional to acknowledge my sins. I knelt before the father with eyes bent towards the earth, and in a low voice proceeded to confess. I had but one crime to deplore, and that was the too tender remembrance of him for whom I mourned, and whose idea impressed upon my heart made it a blemished offering to God.

"I was interrupted in my confession by a sound of deep sobs, and raising my eyes, Oh God! what were my sensations, when in the features of the holy father,  
I dis-



I discovered Angelo ! His image faded like a vision from my sight, and I sunk at his feet. On recovering I found myself on my mattress attended by a sister, who, I discovered by her conversation, had no suspicion of the occasion of my disorder. Indisposition confined me to my bed for several days ; when I recovered, I saw Angelo no more, and could almost have doubted my senses, and believed that an illusion had crossed my sight, till one day I found in my cell a written paper. I distinguished at the first glance the hand writing of Angelo, that well-known hand which had so often awakened me to other emotions. I trembled at the sight ; my beating heart acknowledged the beloved characters ; a cold tremor shook my frame, and half breathless I seized the paper. But recollecting myself, I paused—I hesitated : duty at length yielded to the strong temptation, and I read the lines. Oh ! those lines ! prompted by despair,  
and

and bathed in my tears! every word they offered gave a new pang to my heart, and swelled its anguish almost beyond endurance. I learned that Angelo, severely wounded in a foreign engagement, had been left for dead upon the field; that his life was saved by the humanity of a common soldier of the enemy, who perceiving signs of existence, conveyed him to a house. Assistance was soon procured, but his wounds exhibited the most alarming symptoms. During several months he languished between life and death, till at length his youth and constitution surmounted the conflict, and he returned to Naples. Here he saw my brother, whose distress and astonishment at beholding him, occasioned a relation of past circumstances, and of the vows I had taken in consequence of the report of his death. It is unnecessary to mention the immediate effect of this narration; the final one exhibited a very singular proof of his

his attachment and despair;—he devoted himself to a monastic life, and chose this abbey for the place of his residence, because it contained the object most dear to his affections. His letter informed me that he had purposely avoided discovering himself, endeavouring to be contented with the opportunities which occurred of silently observing me, till chance had occasioned the foregoing interview. But that since its effects had been so mutually painful, he would relieve me from the apprehension of a similar distress, by assuring me, that I should see him no more. He was faithful to his promise; from that day I have never seen him, and am even ignorant whether he yet inhabits this asylum; the efforts of religious fortitude, and the just fear of exciting curiosity, having withheld me from inquiry. But the moment of our last interview has been equally fatal to my peace and to my health, and I trust I shall ere very long  
be



be released from the agonizing ineffectual struggles occasioned by the consciousness of sacred vows imperfectly performed, and by earthly affections not wholly subdued."

Cornelia ceased, and Julia, who had listened to the narrative in deep attention, at once admired, loved, and pitied her. As the sister of Hippolitus, her heart expanded towards her, and it was now inviolably attached by the fine ties of sympathetic sorrow. Similarity of sentiment and suffering united them in the firmest bonds of friendship; and thus from reciprocation of thought and feeling, flowed a pure and sweet consolation.

Julia loved to indulge in the mournful pleasure of conversing of Hippolitus, and when thus engaged, the hours crept unheeded by. A thousand questions she repeated concerning him, but to those most interesting to her, she received

no

no consolatory answer. Cornelia, who had heard of the fatal transaction at the castle of Mazzini, deplored with her its too certain consequence.

CHAP-

## CHAPTER X.

JULIA accustomed herself to walk in the fine evenings under the shade of the high trees that environed the abbey. The dewy coolness of the air refreshed her. The innumerable roseate tints which the parting sun-beams reflected on the rocks above, and the fine vermil glow diffused over the romantic scene beneath, softly fading from the eye, as the night-shades fell, excited sensations of a sweet and tranquil nature, and soothed her into a temporary forgetfulness of her sorrows.

The deep solitude of the place subdued her apprehension, and one evening she ventured with Madame de Menon to lengthen her walk. They returned to the abbey without having seen a human being, except a friar of the monastery, who had been to a neighbouring town to order provision. On the fol-



lowing evening they repeated their walk; and, engaged in conversation, rambled to a considerable distance from the abbey. The distant bell of the monastery sounding for vespers, reminded them of the hour, and looking round, they perceived the extremity of the wood. They were returning towards the abbey, when struck by the appearance of some majestic columns which were distinguishable between the trees, they paused. Curiosity tempted them to examine to what edifice pillars of such magnificent architecture could belong, in a scene so rude, and they went on.

There appeared on a point of rock impending over the valley the reliques of a palace, whose beauty time had impaired only to heighten its sublimity. An arch of singular magnificence remained almost entire, beyond which appeared wild cliffs retiring in grand perspective. The sun, which was now  
 setting,

setting, threw a trembling lustre upon  
 the ruins, and gave a finishing effect to  
 the scene. They gazed in mute wonder  
 upon the view; but the fast fading light,  
 and the dewy chillness of the air warned  
 them to return. As Julia gave a last  
 look to the scene, she perceived two men  
 leaning upon a part of the ruin at  
 some distance, in earnest conversation.  
 As they spoke, their looks were so at-  
 tentively bent on her, that she could  
 have no doubt she was the subject of their  
 discourse. Alarmed at this circumstance,  
 Madame and Julia immediately retreat-  
 ed towards the abbey. They walked  
 swiftly through the woods, whose shades,  
 deepened by the gloom of evening,  
 prevented their distinguishing whether  
 they were pursued. They were surprised  
 to observe the distance to which they  
 had strayed from the monastery, whose  
 dark towers were now obscurely seen  
 rising among the trees that closed the  
 perspective. They had almost reached

the gates, when on looking back, they perceived the same men slowly advancing, without any appearance of pursuit, but clearly as if observing the place of their retreat.

This incident occasioned Julia much alarm. She could not but believe that the men whom she had seen were spies of the marquis — if so, her asylum was discovered, and she had every thing to apprehend. Madame now judged it necessary to the safety of Julia, that the *Abate* should be informed of her story, and of the sanctuary she had sought in his monastery, and also that he should be solicited to protect her from parental tyranny. This was a hazardous, but a necessary step, to provide against the certain danger which must ensue, should the marquis, if he demanded his daughter of the *Abate*, be the first to acquaint him with her story. If she acted otherwise, she feared that the *Abate*, in whose generosity she had not confided, and



and whose pity she had not solicited, would, in the pride of his resentment, deliver her up, and thus would she become a certain victim to the duke de Luovo.

Julia approved of this communication, though she trembled for the event; and requested Madame to plead her cause with the *Abate*. On the following morning, therefore, Madame solicited a private audience of the *Abate*; she obtained permission to see him, and Julia, in trembling anxiety, watched her to the door of his apartment. This conference was long, and every moment seemed an hour to Julia, who, in fearful expectation, awaited with Cornelia the sentence which would decide her destiny. She was now the constant companion of Cornelia, whose declining health interested her pity, and strengthened her attachment.

Meanwhile Madame developed to the *Abate* the distressful story of Julia. She

praised her virtues, commended her accomplishments, and deplored her situation. She described the characters of the marquis and the duke, and concluded with pathetically representing, that Julia had sought in this monastery, a last asylum from injustice and misery, and with intreating that the *Abate* would grant her his pity and protection.

The *Abate* during this discourse preserved a sullen silence; his eyes were bent to the ground, and his aspect was thoughtful and solemn. When Madame ceased to speak, a pause of profound silence ensued, and she sat in anxious expectation. She endeavoured to anticipate in his countenance the answer preparing, but she derived no comfort from thence. At length raising his head, and awakening from his deep reverie, he told her that her request required deliberation, and that the protection she solicited for Julia, might involve

volve him in serious consequences, since, from a character so determined as the marquis's, much violence might reasonably be expected. "Should his daughter be refused him," concluded the *Abate*, "he may even dare to violate the sanctuary."

Madame, shocked by the stern indifference of this reply, was a moment silent. The *Abate* went on. "Whatever I shall determine upon, the young lady has reason to rejoice that she is admitted into this holy house; for I will even now venture to assure her, that if the marquis fails to demand her, she shall be permitted to remain in this sanctuary unmolested. You, Madam, will be sensible of this indulgence, and of the value of the sacrifice I make in granting it; for in thus concealing a child from her parent, I encourage her in disobedience, and consequently sacrifice my sense of duty, to what may be justly called a weak humanity."

D 3

Madame



Madame listened to this pompous declamation in silent sorrow and indignation. She made another effort to interest the *Abate* in favour of Julia, but he preserved his stern inflexibility, and repeating that he would deliberate upon the matter, and acquaint her with the result, he arose with great solemnity, and quitted the room.

She now half repented of the confidence she had reposed in him, and of the pity she had solicited, since he discovered a mind incapable of understanding the first, and a temper inaccessible to the influence of the latter. With an heavy heart she returned to Julia, who read in her countenance, at the moment she entered the room, news of no happy import. When Madame related the particulars of the conference, Julia prefigured from it only misery, and giving herself up for lost—she burst into tears. She severely deplored the confidence she had been induced to yield; for she

now

now saw herself in the power of a man, stern and unfeeling in his nature : and from whom, if he thought it fit to betray her, she had no means of escaping. But she concealed the anguish of her heart; and to console Madame, affected to hope, where she could only despair.

Several days elapsed, and no answer was returned from the *Abate*. Julia too well understood this silence.

One morning Cornelia entering her room with a disturbed and impatient air, informed her that some emissaries from the marquis were then in the monastery, having inquired at the gate for the *Abate*, with whom, they said, they had business of importance to transact. The *Abate* had granted them immediate audience, and they were now in close conference.

At this intelligence the spirits of Julia forsook her; she trembled, grew pale, and stood fixed in mute despair. Madame, though scarcely less distressed,

retained a presence of mind. She understood too justly the character of the Superior, to doubt that he would hesitate in delivering Julia into the hands of the marquis. On this moment, therefore, turned the crisis of her fate!—this moment she might escape—the next she was a prisoner. She therefore advised Julia to seize the instant, and fly from the monastery before the conference was concluded, when the gates would most probably be closed upon her, assuring her, at the same time, she would accompany her in flight.

The generous conduct of Madame called tears of gratitude into the eyes of Julia, who now awoke from the state of stupefaction which distress had caused. But before she could thank her faithful friend, a nun entered the room with a summons for Madame to attend the *Abate* immediately. The distress which this message occasioned can not easily be conceived. Madame advised Julia to  
 escape



escape while she detained the *Abate* in conversation, as it was not probable that he had yet issued orders for her detention. Leaving her to this attempt, with an assurance of following her from the abbey as soon as possible, Madame obeyed the summons. The coolness of her fortitude forsook her as she approached the *Abate's* apartment, and she became less certain as to the occasion of this summons.

The *Abate* was alone. His countenance was pale with anger, and he was pacing the room with slow but agitated steps. The stern authority of his look startled her. "Read this letter," said he, stretching forth his hand which held a letter, "and tell me what that mortal deserves, who dares insult our holy order, and set our sacred prerogative at defiance." Madame distinguished the hand writing of the marquis, and the words of the Superior threw her into the utmost astonishment. She took the

letter. It was dictated by that spirit of proud vindictive rage, which so strongly marked the character of the marquis. Having discovered the retreat of Julia, and believing the monastery afforded her a willing sanctuary from his pursuit, he accused the *Abate* of encouraging his child in open rebellion to his will. He loaded him and his sacred order with opprobrium, and threatened, if she was not immediately resigned to the emissaries in waiting, he would in person lead on a force which should compel the church to yield to the superior authority of the father.

The spirit of the *Abate* was roused by this menace; and Julia obtained from his pride, that protection which neither his principle or his humanity would have granted. "The man shall tremble," cried he, "who dares defy our power, or question our sacred authority. The lady Julia is safe. I will protect her from this proud invader of our rights,

rights, and teach him at least to venerate the power he cannot conquer. I have dispatched his emissaries with my answer."

These words struck sudden joy upon the heart of Madame de Menon, but she instantly recollected, that ere this time Julia had quitted the abbey, and thus the very precaution which was meant to ensure her safety, had probably precipitated her into the hand of her enemy. This thought changed her joy to anguish; and she was hurrying from the apartment in a sort of wild hope, that Julia might not yet be gone, when the stern voice of the *Abate* arrested her. "Is it thus," cried he, "that you receive the knowledge of our generous resolution to protect your friend? Does such condescending kindness merit no thanks—demand no gratitude?" Madame returned in an agony of fear, lest one moment of delay might prove fatal to Julia, if happily she had not yet



quitted the monastery. She was conscious of her deficiency in apparent gratitude, and of the strange appearance of her abrupt departure from the *Abate*, for which it was impossible to apologize, without betraying the secret, which would kindle all his resentment. Yet some atonement his present anger demanded, and these circumstances caused her a very painful embarrassment. She formed a hasty excuse; and expressing her sense of his goodness, again attempted to retire, when the *Abate* frowning in deep resentment, his features inflamed with pride, arose from his seat, "Stay," said he, "whence this impatience to fly from the presence of a benefactor?—If my generosity fails to excite gratitude, my resentment shall not fail to inspire awe.—Since the lady Julia is insensible of my condescension, she is unworthy of my protection, and I will resign her to the tyrant who demands her."

To this speech, in which the offended pride of the *Abate* overcoming all sense of justice, accused and threatened to punish Julia for the fault of her friend, Madame listened in dreadful impatience. Every word that detained her, struck torture to her heart ; but the concluding sentence occasioned new terror, and she started at its purpose. She fell at the feet of the *Abate* in an agony of grief. "Holy father," said she, "punish not Julia for the offence which I only have committed ; her heart will bless her generous protector, and for myself, suffer me to assure you that I am fully sensible of your goodness."

"If this is true," said the *Abate*, "arise, and bid the lady Julia attend me." This command increased the confusion of Madame, who had no doubt that her detention had proved fatal to Julia. At length she was suffered to depart, and to her infinite joy found Julia in her own room. Her intention of escaping  
had

had yielded, immediately after the departure of Madame, to the fear of being discovered by the marquis's people. This fear had been confirmed by the report of Cornelia, who informed her, that at that time several horsemen were waiting at the gates for the return of their companions. This was a dreadful circumstance to Julia, who perceived it was utterly impossible to quit the monastery without rushing upon certain destruction. She was lamenting her destiny, when Madame recited the particulars of the late interview, and delivered the summons of the *Abate*.

They had now to dread the effect of that tender anxiety, which had excited his resentment; and Julia suddenly elated to joy by his first determination, was as suddenly sunk to despair by his last. She trembled with apprehension of the coming interview, though each moment of delay, which her fear solicited, would, by heightening the resentment of the  
*Abate,*



*Abate*, only increase the danger she dreaded.

At length, by a strong effort, she re-  
 animated her spirits, and went to the  
*Abate's* closet to receive her sentence.  
 He was seated in his chair, and his  
 frowning aspect chilled her heart.—  
 “ Daughter,” said he, “ you have been  
 guilty of heinous crimes. You have  
 dared to dispute—nay openly to rebel  
 against the lawful authority of your fa-  
 ther. You have disobeyed the will of  
 him whose prerogative yields only to  
 our’s. You have questioned his right  
 upon a point of all others the most de-  
 cided—the right of a father to dispose  
 of his child in marriage. You have even  
 fled from his protection—and you have  
 dared—infidiously, and meanly have  
 dared, to screen your disobedience be-  
 neath this sacred roof. You have pro-  
 faned our sanctuary with your crime.  
 You have brought insult upon our sa-  
 cred order, and have caused bold and  
 impious

impious defiance of our high prerogative. What punishment is adequate to guilt like this ?”

The father paused—his eyes sternly fixed on Julia, who, pale and trembling, could scarcely support herself, and who had no power to reply. “I will be merciful, and not just,” resumed he,—“I will soften the punishment you deserve, and will only deliver you to your father.” At these dreadful words, Julia bursting into tears, sunk at the feet of the *Abate*, to whom she raised her eyes in supplicating expression, but was unable to speak. He suffered her to remain in this posture. “Your duplicity,” he resumed, “is not the least of your offences.—Had you relied upon our generosity for forgiveness and protection, an indulgence might have been granted;—but under the disguise of virtue you concealed your crimes, and your necessities were hid beneath the mask of devotion.

These

These false aspersions roused in Julia the spirit of indignant virtue; she arose from her knees with an air of dignity, that struck even the *Abate*. "Holy father," said she, "my heart abhors the crime you mention, and disclaims all union with it. Whatever are my offences, from the sin of hypocrisy I am at least free; and you will pardon me if I remind you, that my confidence has already been such, as fully justifies my claim to the protection I solicit. When I sheltered myself within these walls, it was to be presumed that they would protect me from injustice; and with what other term than injustice would you, Sir, distinguish the conduct of the marquis, if the fear of his power did not overcome the dictates of truth?"

The *Abate* felt the full force of this reproof; but disdaining to appear sensible to it, restrained his resentment. His wounded pride thus exasperated, and all the malignant passions of his nature thus  
called



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called into action, he was prompted to that cruel surrender which he had never before seriously intended. The offence which Madame de Menon had unintentionally given, his haughty spirit urged him to retaliate in punishment. He had, therefore, pleased himself with exciting a terror which he never meant to confirm, and he resolved to be further solicited for that protection which he had already determined to grant. But this reproof of Julia touched him where he was most conscious of defect; and the temporary triumph which he imagined it afforded her, kindled his resentment into flame. He mused in his chair, in a fixed attitude.—She saw in his countenance the deep workings of his mind—she revolved the fate preparing for her, and stood in trembling anxiety to receive her sentence. The *Abate* considered each aggravating circumstance of the marquis's menace, and each sentence of Julia's speech; and his mind



mind experienced, that vice is not only inconsistent with virtue, but with itself—for to gratify his malignity, he now discovered that it would be necessary to sacrifice his pride—since it would be impossible to punish the object of the first, without denying himself the gratification of the latter. This reflection suspended his mind in a state of torture, and he sat wrapt in gloomy silence.

The spirit which lately animated Julia, had vanished with her words—each moment of silence increased her apprehension; the deep brooding of his thoughts confirmed her in the apprehension of evil, and with all the artless eloquence of sorrow, she endeavoured to soften him to pity. He listened to her pleadings in sullen stillness. But each instant now cooled the fervor of his resentment to her, and increased his desire of opposing the marquis. At length the predominant feature of his character resumed its original influence,  
and

and overcame the workings of subordinate passion. Proud of his religious authority, he determined never to yield the prerogative of the church to that of the father, and resolved to oppose the violence of the marquis with equal force.

He therefore condescended to relieve Julia from her terrors, by assuring her of his protection; but he did this in a manner so ungracious, as almost to destroy the gratitude which the promise demanded. She hastened with the joyful intelligence to Madame de Menon, who wept over her tears of thankfulness.

## CHAPTER XI.

**N**EAR a fortnight had elapsed without producing any appearance of hostility from the marquis, when one night, long after the hour of repose, Julia was awakened by the bell of the monastery. She knew it was not the hour customary for prayer, and she listened to the sounds, which rolled through the deep silence of the fabric, with strong surprize and terror. Presently she heard the doors of several cells creak on their hinges, and the sound of quick footsteps in the passages—and through the crevices of her door she distinguished passing lights. The whispering noise of steps increased, and every person of the monastery seemed to have awakened. Her terror heightened; it occurred to her that the marquis had surrounded the abbey with his people, in the design of forcing her from her retreat; and she  
arose



arose in haste, with an intention of going to the chamber of Madame de Menon, when she heard a gentle tap at the door. Her inquiry of who was there, was answered in the voice of Madame, and her fears were quickly dissipated, for she learned the bell was a summons to attend a dying nun, who was going to the high altar, there to receive extreme unction.

She quitted the chamber with Madame. In her way to the church, the gleam of tapers on the walls, and the glimpse which her eye often caught of the friars in their long black habits, descending silently through the narrow winding passages, with the solemn toll of the bell, conspired to kindle imagination, and to impress her heart with sacred awe. But the church exhibited a scene of solemnity, such as she had never before witnessed. Its gloomy aisles were imperfectly seen by the rays of tapers from the high altar, which shed a soli-

tary

tary gleam over the remote parts of the fabric, and produced large masses of light and shade, striking and sublime in their effect.

While she gazed, she heard a distant chanting rise through the aisles; the sounds swelled in low murmurs on the ear, and drew nearer and nearer, till a sudden blaze of light issued from one of the portals, and the procession entered. The organ instantly sounded a high and solemn peal, and the voices rising altogether, swelled the sacred strain. In front appeared the *Padre Abate*, with slow and measured steps, bearing the holy cross. Immediately followed a litter, on which lay the dying person covered with a white veil, borne along and surrounded by nuns veiled in white, each carrying in her hand a lighted taper. Last came the friars, two and two, clothed in black, and each bearing a light.

When they reached the high altar, the bier was rested, and in a few moments

ments the anthem ceased. The *Abate* now approached to perform the unction; the veil of the dying nun was lifted—and Julia discovered her beloved Cornelia! Her countenance was already impressed with the image of death, but her eyes brightened with a faint gleam of recollection, when they fixed upon Julia, who felt a cold thrill run through her frame, and leaned for support on Madame. Julia now for the first time distinguished the unhappy lover of Cornelia, on whose features was depicted the anguish of his heart, and who hung pale and silent over the bier. The ceremony being finished, the anthem struck up; the bier was lifted, when Cornelia faintly moved her hand, and it was again rested upon the steps of the altar. In a few minutes the music ceased; when lifting her heavy eyes to her lover, with an expression of ineffable tenderness and grief, she attempted to speak,



speak, but the sounds died on her closing  
 lips. A faint smile passed over her  
 countenance, and was succeeded by a  
 fine devotional glow; she folded her  
 hands upon her bosom, and with a look  
 of meek resignation, raising towards  
 heaven her eyes, in which now sunk  
 the last sparkles of expiring life—her  
 soul departed in a short deep sigh.

Her lover, sinking back, endeavoured  
 to conceal his emotions, but the deep  
 sobs which agitated his breast, betrayed  
 his anguish, and the tears of every spec-  
 tator bedewed the sacred spot where  
 beauty, sense, and innocence expired.

The organ now swelled in mournful  
 harmony; and the voices of the assem-  
 bly chanted in coral strain, a low and  
 solemn requiem to the spirit of the de-  
 parted.

Madame hurried Julia, who was al-  
 most as lifeless as her departed friend,  
 from the church. A death so sudden,  
 heightened the grief which separation

would otherwise have occasioned. It was the nature of Cornelia's disorder, to wear a changeful but flattering aspect. Though she had long been declining, her decay was so gradual and imperceptible, as to lull the apprehension of her friends into security. It was otherwise with herself; she was conscious of the change, but forbore to afflict them with the knowledge of the truth. The hour of her dissolution was sudden, even to herself; but it was composed, and even happy. In the death of Cornelia, Julia seemed to mourn again that of Hippolitus. Her decease appeared to dissolve the last tie which connected her with his memory.

In one of the friars of the convent, Madame was surprized to find the father who had confessed the dying Vincent. His appearance revived the remembrance of the scene she had witnessed at the castle of Mazzini; and the last words of Vincent, combined with the  
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circumstances which had since occurred, renewed all her curiosity and astonishment. But his appearance excited more sensations than those of wonder. She dreaded, lest he should be corrupted by the marquis, to whom he was known, and thus be induced to use his interest with the *Abate* for the restoration of Julia.

From the walls of the monastery, Julia now never ventured to stray. In the gloom of evening she sometimes stole into the cloisters, and often lingered at the grave of Cornelia, where she wept for Hippolitus, as well as for her friend. One evening, during vespers, the bell of the convent was suddenly rang out; the *Abate*, whose countenance expressed at once astonishment and displeasure, suspended the service, and quitted the altar. The whole congregation repaired to the hall, where they learned that a friar, retiring to the convent, had seen a troop of armed men advancing through



the wood ; and not doubting they were the people of the marquis, and were approaching with hostile intention, had thought it necessary to give the alarm. The *Abate* ascended a turret, and thence discovered through the trees a glittering of arms, and in the succeeding moment a band of men issued from a dark part of the wood, into a long avenue which immediately fronted the spot where he stood. The clattering of hoofs was now distinctly heard ; and Julia, sinking with terror, distinguished the marquis heading the troop, which soon after separating in two divisions, surrounded the monastery. The gates were immediately secured ; and the *Abate*, descending from the turret, assembled the friars in the hall, where his voice was soon heard above every other part of the tumult. The terror of Julia made her utterly forgetful of the *Padre's* promise, and she wished to fly for concealment to the deep caverns belonging

ing to the monastery, which wound under the woods. Madame, whose penetration furnished her with a just knowledge of the *Abate's* character, founded her security on his pride. She therefore dissuaded Julia from attempting to tamper with the honesty of a servant who had the keys of the vaults, and advised her to rely entirely on the effect of the *Abate's* resentment towards the marquis. While Madame endeavoured to soothe her to composure, a message from the *Abate* required her immediate attendance. She obeyed, and he bade her follow him to a room which was directly over the gates of the monastery. From thence she saw her father, accompanied by the duke de Luovo; and as her spirits died away at the sight, the marquis called furiously to the *Abate* to deliver her instantly into his hands, threatening, if she was detained, to force the gates of the monastery. At this threat the countenance of the *Abate* grew dark: and

leading Julia forcibly to the window, from which she had shrunk back, "Impious menacer!" said he, "eternal vengeance be upon thee! From this moment we expel thee from all the rights and communities of our church. Arrogant and daring as you are, your threats I defy. Look here," said he, pointing to Julia, "and learn that you are in my power; for if you dare to violate these sacred walls, I will proclaim aloud in the face of day, a secret which shall make your heart's blood run cold; a secret which involves your honour, nay, your very existence. Now triumph and exult in impious menace!" The marquis started involuntarily at this speech, and his features underwent a sudden change, but he endeavoured to recover himself, and to conceal his confusion. He hesitated for a few moments, uncertain how to act—to desist from violence was to confess himself conscious of the threatened secret; yet he



he dreaded to inflame the resentment of the *Abate*, whose menaces his own heart too surely seconded. At length—"All that you have uttered," said he, "I despise as the dastardly subterfuge of monkish cunning. Your new insults add to the desire of recovering my daughter, that of punishing you. I would proceed to instant violence, but that would now be an imperfect revenge. I shall therefore withdraw my forces, and appeal to a higher power. Thus shall you be compelled at once to restore my daughter, and retract your scandalous impeachment of my honour." Saying this, he turned his horse from the gates, and his people following him, quickly withdrew, leaving the *Abate* exulting in conquest, and Julia lost in astonishment and doubtful joy. When she recounted to Madame the particulars of the conference, she dwelt with emphasis on the threats of the *Abate*; but Madame, though her amazement was heightened

at every word, very well understood how the secret, whatever it was, had been obtained. The confessor of Vincent she had already observed in the monastery, and there was no doubt that he had disclosed whatever could be collected from the dying words of Vincent. She knew also, that the secret would never be published, unless as a punishment for immediate violence, it being one of the first principles of monastic duty, to observe a religious secrecy upon all matters entrusted to them in confession.

When the first tumult of Julia's emotion subsided, the joy which the sudden departure of the marquis occasioned, yielded to apprehension. He had threatened to appeal to a higher power, who would compel the *Abate* to surrender her. This menace excited a just terror, and there remained no means of avoiding the tyranny of the marquis, but by quitting the monastery. She therefore requested an audience of the *Abate*;  
and

and having represented the danger of her present situation, she entreated his permission to depart in quest of a safer retreat. The *Abate*, who well knew the marquis was wholly in his power, smiled at the repetition of his menaces, and denied her request, under pretence of his having now become responsible for her to the church. He bade her be comforted, and promised her his protection; but his assurances were given in so distant and haughty a manner, that Julia left him with fears, rather increased than subdued. In crossing the hall, she observed a man hastily enter it from an opposite door. He was not in the habit of the order, but was muffled up in a cloak, and seemed to wish concealment. As she passed he raised his head, and Julia discovered—her father! He darted at her a look of vengeance; but before she had time even to think, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he covered his face, and rushed by her. Her

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trembling frame could scarcely support her to the apartment of Madame; where she sunk speechless upon a chair, and the terror of her look alone spoke the agony of her mind. When she was somewhat recovered she related what she had seen, and her conversation with the *Abate*. But Madame was lost in equal perplexity with herself, when she attempted to account for the marquis's appearance. Why, after his late daring menace, should he come secretly to visit the *Abate*, by whose connivance alone he could have gained admittance to the monastery? And what could have influenced the *Abate* to such a conduct?—These circumstances, though equally inexplicable, united to confirm a fear of treachery and surrender. To escape from the abbey was now impracticable; for the gates were constantly guarded; and even was it possible to pass them, certain detection awaited Julia without from the marquis's people, who were stationed

stationed in the woods. Thus encompassed with danger, she could only await in the monastery the issue of her destiny.

While she was lamenting with Madame her unhappy state, she was summoned once more to attend the *Abate*. At this moment her spirits entirely forsook her; the crisis of her fate seemed arrived; for she did not doubt that the *Abate* intended to surrender her to the marquis, with whom she supposed he had negotiated the terms of accommodation. It was some time before she could recover composure sufficient to obey the summons; and when she did, every step that bore her towards the *Abate's* room, increased her dread. She paused a moment at the door, ere she had courage to open it; the idea of her father's immediate resentment arose to her mind, and she was upon the point of retreating to her chamber, when a sudden step within, near the door, destroyed her hesitation, and she entered

the closet. The marquis was not there, and her spirits revived. The flush of triumph was diffused over the features of the *Abate*, though a shade of unappeased resentment yet remained visible. "Daughter," said he, "the intelligence we have to communicate may rejoice you. Your safety now depends solely on yourself. I give your fate into your own hands, and its issue be upon your head." He paused, and she was suspended in wondering expectation of the coming sentence. "I here solemnly assure you of my protection, but it is upon one condition only—that you renounce the world, and dedicate your days to God." Julia listened with a mixture of grief and astonishment. "Without this concession on your part, I possess not the power, had I even the inclination, to protect you. If you assume the veil, you are safe within the pale of the church from temporal violence. If you neglect or refuse to do this, the marquis may



may apply to a power from whom I have no appeal, and I shall be compelled at last to resign you."

"But to ensure your safety, should the veil be your choice, we will procure a dispensation from the usual forms of noviciation, and a few days shall confirm your vows." He ceased to speak; but Julia agitated with the most cruel distress, knew not what to reply. "We grant you three days to decide upon this matter," continued he, "at the expiration of which, the veil, or the duke de Luovo, awaits you." Julia quitted the closet in mute despair, and repaired to Madame, who could now scarcely offer her the humble benefit of consolation.

Meanwhile the *Abate* exulted in successful vengeance, and the marquis smarted beneath the stings of disappointment. The menace of the former was too seriously alarming to suffer the marquis

to

to prosecute violent measures; and he had therefore resolved, by opposing avarice to pride, to soothe the power which he could not subdue. But he was unwilling to entrust the *Abate* with a proof of his compliance and his fears, by offering a bribe in a letter, and preferred the more humiliating, but safer method, of a private interview. His magnificent offers created a temporary hesitation in the mind of the *Abate*, who, secure of his advantage, shewed at first no disposition to be reconciled, and suffered the marquis to depart in anxious uncertainty. After maturely deliberating upon the proposals, the pride of the *Abate* surmounted his avarice, and he determined to prevail upon Julia effectually to destroy the hopes of the marquis, by consecrating her life to religion. Julia passed the night and the next day in a state of mental torture exceeding all description. The gates of the monastery beset with guards, and the  
woods

woods surrounded by the marquis's people, made escape impossible. From a marriage with the duke, whose late conduct had confirmed the odious idea which his character had formerly impressed, her heart recoiled in horror, and to be immured for life within the walls of a convent, was a fate little less dreadful. Yet such was the effect of that sacred love she bore the memory of Hippolitus, and such her aversion to the duke, that she soon resolved to adopt the veil. On the following evening she informed the *Abate* of her determination. Her heart swelled with secret joy; and even the natural severity of his manner relaxed at the intelligence. He assured her of his approbation and protection, with a degree of kindness which he had never before manifested, and told her the ceremony should be performed on the second day from the present. Her emotion scarcely suffered her to hear his last words.



Now that her fate was fixed beyond recall, she almost repented of her choice: Her fancy attached to it a horror not its own; and that evil, which, when offered to her decision, she had accepted with little hesitation, she now paused upon in dubious regret; so apt we are to imagine that the calamity most certain, is also the most intolerable!

When the marquis read the answer of the *Abate*, all the baleful passions of his nature were roused and inflamed to a degree which bordered upon distraction. In the first impulse of his rage, he would have forced the gates of the monastery, and defied the utmost malice of his enemy. But a moment's reflection revived his fear of the threatened secret, and he saw that he was still in the power of the Superior.

The *Abate* procured the necessary dispensation, and preparations were immediately begun for the approaching ceremony. Julia watched the departure  
of

of those moments which led to her fate with the calm fortitude of despair. She had no means of escaping from the coming evil, without exposing herself to a worse ; she surveyed it therefore with a steady eye, and no longer shrunk from its approach.

On the morning preceding the day of her consecration, she was informed that a stranger inquired for her at the grate. Her mind had been so long accustomed to the vicissitudes of apprehension, that fear was the emotion which now occurred ; she suspected, yet scarcely knew why, that the marquis was below, and hesitated whether to descend. A little reflection determined her, and she went to the parlour—where to her equal joy and surprize she beheld—Ferdinand !

During the absence of the marquis from his castle, Ferdinand, who had been informed of the discovery of Julia, effected his escape from imprisonment,  
and

and had hastened to the monastery in the design of rescuing her. He had passed the woods in disguise, with much difficulty, eluding the observation of the marquis's people, who were yet dispersed round the abbey. To the monastery, as he came alone, he had been admitted without difficulty.

When he learned the conditions of the *Abate's* protection, and that the following day was appointed for the consecration of Julia, he was shocked, and paused in deliberation. A period so short as was this interval, afforded little opportunity for contrivance, and less for hesitation. The night of the present day was the only time that remained for the attempt and execution of a plan of escape, which if it then failed of success, Julia would not only be condemned for life to the walls of a monastery, but would be subjected to whatever punishment the severity of the *Abate*, exasperated by the detection, should think fit

to



to inflict. The danger was desperate, but the occasion was desperate also.

The nobly disinterested conduct of her brother, struck Julia with gratitude and admiration ; but despair of success, made her now hesitate whether she should accept his offer. She considered that his generosity would most probably involve him in destruction with herself ; and she paused in deep deliberation, when Ferdinand informed her of a circumstance which, till now, he had purposely concealed, and which at once dissolved every doubt and every fear. " Hippolitus," said Ferdinand, " yet lives."—" Lives!" repeated Julia faintly,—" lives ! Oh ! tell me where—how."—Her breath refused to aid her, and she sunk in her chair, overcome with the strong and various sensations that pressed upon her heart. Ferdinand, whom the grate withheld from assisting her, observed her situation in extreme distress. When she recovered, he informed her that

that a servant of Hippolitus, sent no doubt by his lord to inquire concerning Julia, had been lately seen by one of the marquis's people in the neighbourhood of the castle. From him it was known that the count de Vereza was living, but that his life had been despaired of; and he was still confined, by dangerous wounds, in an obscure town on the coast of Italy. The man had steadily refused to mention the place of his lord's abode. Learning that the marquis was then at the abbey of St. Augustin, whither he pursued his daughter, the man disappeared from Mazzini, and had not since been heard of.

It was enough for Julia to know that Hippolitus lived; her fears of detection, and her scruples concerning Ferdinand, instantly vanished; she thought only of escape—and the means which had lately appeared so formidable—so difficult in contrivance, and so dangerous in execution, now seemed easy, certain, and almost accomplished.

They

They consulted on the plan to be adopted; and agreed, that in attempting to bribe a servant of the monastery to their interest, they should incur a danger too imminent, yet it appeared scarcely practicable to succeed in their scheme without risking this. After much consideration, they determined to entrust their secret to no person but to Madame. Ferdinand was to contrive to conceal himself till the dead of night in the church, between which and the monastery were several doors of communication. When the inhabitants of the abbey were sunk in repose, Julia might without difficulty pass to the church, where Ferdinand awaiting her, they might perhaps escape either through an outer door of the fabric, or through a window, for which latter attempt Ferdinand was to provide ropes.

A couple of horses were to be stationed among the rocks beyond the woods, to convey the fugitives to a sea-port, whence they

They



they could easily pass over to Italy. Having arranged this plan, they separated in the anxious hope of meeting on the ensuing night.

Madame warmly sympathised with Julia in her present expectations, and was now somewhat relieved from the pressure of that self-reproach, with which the consideration of having withdrawn her young friend from a secure asylum, had long tormented her. In learning that Hippolitus lived, Julia experienced a sudden renovation of life and spirits. From the languid stupefaction which despair had occasioned, she revived as from a dream, and her sensations resembled those of a person suddenly awakened from a frightful vision, whose thoughts are yet obscured in the fear and uncertainty which the passing images have impressed on his fancy. She emerged from despair; joy illumined her countenance; yet she doubted the reality of the scene which now opened to her view.

view. The hours rolled heavily along till the evening, when expectation gave way to fear, for she was once more summoned by the *Abate*. He sent for her to administer the usual necessary exhortation on the approaching solemnity; and having detained her a considerable time in tedious and severe discourse, dismissed her with a formal benediction.

## CHAP.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE evening now sunk in darkness, and the hour was fast approaching which would decide the fate of Julia. Trembling anxiety subdued every other sensation ; and as the minutes passed, her fears increased. At length she heard the gates of the monastery fastened for the night ; the bell rang the signal for repose ; and the passing footsteps of the nuns told her they were hastening to obey it. After some time, all was silent. Julia did not yet dare to venture forth ; she employed the present interval in interesting and affectionate conversation with Madame de Menon, to whom, notwithstanding her situation, her heart bade a sorrowful adieu.

The clock struck twelve, when she arose to depart. Having embraced her faithful friend with tears of mingled  
 I grief



grief and anxiety, she took a lamp in her hand, and with cautious, fearful steps descended through the long winding passages to a private door, which opened into the church of the monastery. The church was gloomy and desolate; and the feeble rays of the lamp she bore, gave only light enough to discover its chilling grandeur. As she passed silently along the aisles, she cast a look of anxious examination around—but Ferdinand was no where to be seen. She paused in timid hesitation, fearful to penetrate the gloomy obscurity which lay before her, yet dreading to return.

As she stood examining the place, vainly looking for Ferdinand, yet fearing to call, lest her voice should betray her, a hollow groan arose from a part of the church very near her. It chilled her heart, and she remained fixed to the spot. She turned her eyes a little to the left, and saw light appear through

the chinks of a sepulchre at some distance. The groan was repeated—a low murmuring succeeded, and while she yet gazed, an old man issued from the vault with a lighted taper in his hand. Terror now subdued her, and she uttered an involuntary shriek. In the succeeding moment, a noise was heard in a remote part of the fabric; and Ferdinand rushing forth from his concealment, ran to her assistance. The old man, who appeared to be a friar, and who had been doing penance at the monument of a saint, now approached. His countenance expressed a degree of surprize and terror almost equal to that of Julia's, who knew him to be the confessor of Vincent. Ferdinand seized the father; and laying his hand upon his sword, threatened him with death if he did not instantly swear to conceal for ever his knowledge of what he then saw, and also assist them to escape from the abbey.

“ Ungracious

“Ungracious boy!” replied the father in a calm voice, “desist from this language, nor add to the follies of youth the crime of murdering, or terrifying a defenceless old man. Your violence would urge me to become your enemy, did not previous inclination tempt me to be your friend. I pity the distresses of the lady Julia, to whom I am no stranger, and will cheerfully give her all the assistance in my power.”

At these words Julia revived, and Ferdinand, reproved by the generosity of the father, and conscious of his own inferiority, shrunk back. “I have no words to thank you,” said he, “or to entreat your pardon for the impetuosity of my conduct; your knowledge of my situation must plead my excuse.”—“It does,” replied the father, “but we have no time to lose:—follow me.”

They followed him through the church to the cloisters, at the extremity of which was a small door, which the friar unlocked. It opened upon the woods.



"This path," said he, "leads through an intricate part of the woods, to the rocks that rise on the right of the abbey; in their recesses you may secrete yourselves till you are prepared for a longer journey. But extinguish your light; it may betray you to the marquis's people, who are dispersed about this spot. Farewell! my children, and God's blessing be upon ye."

Julia's tears declared her gratitude; she had no time for words. They stepped into the path, and the father closed the door. They were now liberated from the monastery, but danger awaited them without, which it required all their caution to avoid. Ferdinand knew the path, which the friar had pointed out, to be the same that led to the rocks where his horses were stationed, and he pursued it with quick and silent steps. Julia, whose fears conspired with the gloom of night to magnify and transform every object around her, imagined

gined at each step that she took, she perceived the figures of men, and fancied every whisper of the breeze the sound of pursuit.

They proceeded swiftly, till Julia, breathless and exhausted, could go no farther. They had not rested many minutes, when they heard a rustling among the bushes at some distance, and soon after distinguished a low sound of voices. Ferdinand and Julia instantly renewed their flight, and thought they still heard voices advance upon the wind. This thought was soon confirmed, for the sounds now gained fast upon them, and they distinguished words which served only to heighten their apprehensions when they reached the extremity of the woods. The moon, which was now up, suddenly emerging from a dark cloud, discovered to them several men in pursuit; and also shewed to the pursuers the course of the fugitives. They endeavoured to gain the rocks where the horses were concealed, and

which now appeared in view. These they reached when the pursuers had almost overtaken them—but their horses were gone! Their only remaining chance of escape was to fly into the deep recesses of the rock. They, therefore, entered a winding cave from whence branched several subterraneous avenues, at the extremity of one of which they stopped. The voices of men now vibrated in tremendous echoes through the various and secret caverns of the place, and the sound of footsteps seemed fast approaching. Julia trembled with terror, and Ferdinand drew his sword, determined to protect her to the last. A confused volley of voices now sounded up that part of the cave where Ferdinand and Julia lay concealed. In a few moments the steps of the pursuers suddenly took a different direction, and the sounds sunk gradually away, and were heard no more. Ferdinand listened attentively for a considerable time, but the stillness of  
of



of the place remained undisturbed. It was now evident that the men had quitted the rock, and he ventured forth to the mouth of the cave. He surveyed the wilds around, as far as his eye could penetrate, and distinguished no human being; but in the pauses of the wind he still thought he heard a sound of distant voices. As he listened in anxious silence, his eye caught the appearance of a shadow, which moved upon the ground near where he stood. He started back within the cave, but in a few minutes again ventured forth. The shadow remained stationary; but having watched it for some time, Ferdinand saw it glide along till it disappeared behind a point of rock. He had now no doubt that the cave was watched, and that it was one of his late pursuers whose shade he had seen. He returned, therefore, to Julia, and remained near an hour hid in the deepest recess of the rock; when, no sound having interrupted the pro-

found silence of the place, he at length once more ventured to the mouth of the cave. Again he threw a fearful look around, but discerned no human form. The soft moon-beam slept upon the dewy landscape, and the solemn stillness of midnight wrapt the world. Fear heightened to the fugitives the sublimity of the hour. Ferdinand now led Julia forth, and they passed silently along the shelving foot of the rocks.

They continued their way without farther interruption; and among the cliffs at some distance from the cave, discovered to their inexpressible joy, their horses, who having broken their fastenings, had strayed thither, and had now laid themselves down to rest. Ferdinand and Julia immediately mounted; and descending to the plains, took the road that lead to a small sea-port at some leagues distance, whence they could embark for Italy.

They travelled for some hours through  
gloomy

gloomy forests of beech and chefnut; and their way was only faintly illuminated by the moon, which shed a trembling lustre through the dark foliage, and which was seen but at intervals, as the passing clouds yielded to the power of her rays. They reached at length the skirts of the forest. The grey dawn now appeared, and the chill morning air bit shrewdly. It was with inexpressible joy that Julia observed the kindling atmosphere; and soon after the rays of the rising sun touching the tops of the mountains, whose sides were yet involved in dark vapours.

Her fears dissipated with the darkness.—The sun now appeared amid clouds of inconceivable splendour; and unveiled a scene which in other circumstances Julia would have contemplated with rapture. From the side of the hill, down which they were winding, a vale appeared, from whence arose wild and lofty mountains, whose steeps were cloath-



ed with hanging woods, except where here and there a precipice projected its bold and rugged front. Here, a few half withered trees hung from the crevices of the rock, and gave a picturesque wildness to the object; there, clusters of half seen cottages, rising from among tufted groves, embellished the green margin of a stream which meandered in the bottom, and bore its waves to the blue and distant main.

The freshness of morning breathed over the scene, and vivified each colour of the landscape. The bright dew-drops hung trembling from the branches of the trees, which at intervals overshadowed the road; and the sprightly music of the birds saluted the rising day. Notwithstanding her anxiety, the scene diffused a soft complacency over the mind of Julia.

About noon they reached the port, where Ferdinand was fortunate enough to obtain a small vessel; but the wind was

was unfavourable, and it was past midnight before it was possible for them to embark.

When the dawn appeared, Julia returned to the deck; and viewed with a sigh of unaccountable regret, the receding coast of Sicily. But she observed with high admiration, the light gradually spreading through the atmosphere, darting a feeble ray over the surface of the waters, which rolled in solemn soundings upon the distant shores. Fiery beams now marked the clouds, and the east glowed with increasing radiance, till the sun rose at once above the waves, and illuminating them with a flood of splendour, diffused gaiety and gladness around. The bold concave of the heavens, uniting with the vast expanse of the ocean, formed a *coup d'œil*, striking and sublime. The magnificence of the scenery inspired Julia with delight; and her heart dilating with high enthusiasm, she forgot the sorrows which had oppressed her.

The breeze wafted the ship gently along for some hours, when it gradually sunk into a calm. The glassy surface of the waters was not curled by the lightest air, and the vessel floated heavily on the bosom of the deep. Sicily was yet in view, and the present delay agitated Julia with wild apprehension. Towards the close of day a light breeze sprang up, but it blew from Italy, and a train of dark vapours emerged from the verge of the horizon, which gradually accumulating, the heavens became entirely overcast. The evening shut in suddenly; the rising wind, the heavy clouds that loaded the atmosphere, and the thunder which murmured afar off, terrified Julia, and threatened a violent storm.

The tempest came on, and the captain vainly sounded for anchorage: it was deep sea, and the vessel drove furiously before the wind. The darkness was interrupted only at intervals by the broad expanse of vivid lightnings, which



which quivered upon the waters, and disclosing the horrible gaspings of the waves, served to render the succeeding darkness more awful. The thunder which burst in tremendous crashes above, the loud roar of the waves below, the noise of the sailors, and the sudden cracks and groanings of the vessel, conspired to heighten the tremendous sublimity of the scene.

Far on the rocky shores the surges sound,  
The lashing whirlwinds cleave the fast profound;  
While high in air, amid the rising storm,  
Driving the blast, sits Danger's black'ning form.

Julia lay fainting with terror and sickness in the cabin, and Ferdinand, though almost hopeless himself, was endeavouring to support her, when a loud and dreadful crash was heard from above. It seemed as if the whole vessel had parted. The voices of the sailors now rose together, and all was confusion and uproar. Ferdinand ran up to the deck, and learned that part of the main mast,

borne away by the wind, had fallen upon the deck, whence it had rolled overboard.

It was now past midnight, and the storm continued with unabated fury. For four hours the vessel had been driven before the blast; and the captain now declaring it was impossible she could weather the tempest much longer, ordered the long boat to be in readiness. His orders were scarcely executed, when the ship bulged upon a reef of rocks, and the impetuous waves rushed into the vessel:—a general groan ensued. Ferdinand flew to save his sister, whom he carried to the boat, which was nearly filled by the captain and most of the crew. The sea ran so high that it appeared impracticable to reach the shore; but the boat had not moved many yards, when the ship went to pieces. The captain now perceived by the flashes of lightning, a high rocky coast at about the distance of half a mile. The men

men struggled hard at the oars; but almost as often as they gained the summit of a wave, it dashed them back again, and made their labour of little avail.

After much difficulty and fatigue they reached the coast, where a new danger presented itself. They beheld a wild rocky shore, whose cliffs appeared inaccessible, and which seemed to afford little possibility of landing. A landing, however, was at last effected; and the sailors, after much search, discovered a kind of path-way cut in the rock, which they all ascended in safety.

The dawn now faintly glimmered, and they surveyed the coast, but could discover no human habitation. They imagined they were on the shores of Sicily, but possessed no means of confirming this conjecture. Terror, sickness, and fatigue had subdued the strength and spirits of Julia, and she was obliged to rest upon the rocks.

The



The storm now suddenly subsided, and the total calm which succeeded to the wild tumult of the winds and waves, produced a striking and sublime effect. The air was hushed in a deathlike stillness, but the waves were yet violently agitated; and by the increasing light, parts of the wreck were seen floating wide upon the face of the deep. Some sailors who had missed the boat were also discovered clinging to pieces of the vessel, and making towards the shore. On observing this, their shipmates immediately descended to the boat; and putting off to sea, rescued them from their perilous situation. When Julia was somewhat re-animated, they proceeded up the country in search of a dwelling.

They had travelled near half a league, when the savage features of the country began to soften, and gradually changed to the picturesque beauty of Sicilian scenery. They now discovered at some distance a villa, seated on a gentle

the eminence crowned with woods. It was the first human habitation they had seen since they embarked for Italy ; and Julia, who was almost sinking with fatigue, beheld it with delight. The captain and his men hastened towards it to make known their distress, while Ferdinand and Julia slowly followed. They observed the men enter the villa, one of whom quickly returned to acquaint them with the hospitable reception his comrades had received.

Julia with difficulty reached the edifice, at the door of which she was met by a young cavalier, whose pleasing and intelligent countenance immediately interested her in his favour. He welcomed the strangers with a benevolent politeness, that dissolved at once every uncomfortable feeling which their situation had excited, and produced an instantaneous easy confidence. Through a light and elegant hall, rising into a dome, supported by pillars of white marble,

marble, and adorned with busts ; he led them to a magnificent vestibule, which opened upon a lawn. Having seated them at a table spread with refreshments, he left them, and they surveyed with surprize, the beauty of the adjacent scene.

The lawn, which was on each side bounded by hanging woods, descended in gentle declivity to a fine lake, whose smooth surface reflected the surrounding shades. Beyond appeared the distant country, rising on the left into bold romantic mountains, and on the right, exhibiting a soft and glowing landscape, whose tranquil beauty formed a striking contrast to the wild sublimity of the opposite craggy heights. The blue and distant ocean terminated the view.

In a short time the cavalier returned, conducting two ladies of a very engaging appearance, whom he presented as his wife and sister. They welcomed Julia with graceful kindness ; but fatigue



tigue soon obliged her to retire to rest, and a consequent indisposition increased so rapidly, as to render it impracticable for her to quit her present abode on that day. The captain and his men proceeded on their way, leaving Ferdinand and Julia at the villa, where she experienced every kind and tender affection.

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The day which was to have devoted Julia to a cloister, was ushered in at the abbey with the usual ceremonies. The church was ornamented, and all the inhabitants of the monastery prepared to attend. The *Padre Abate* now exulted in the success of his scheme, and anticipated in imagination, the rage and vexation of the marquis, when he should discover that his daughter was lost to him for ever.

The hour of celebration arrived, and he entered the church with a proud firm step, and with a countenance which depicted his inward triumph; he

he was proceeding to the high altar, when he was told that Julia was no where to be found. Astonishment for a while suspended other emotions—he yet believed it impossible that she could have effected an escape, and ordered every part of the abbey to be searched—not forgetting the secret caverns belonging to the monastery, which wound beneath the woods. When the search was over, and he became convinced she was fled, the deep workings of his disappointed passions fermented into rage which exceeded all bounds. He denounced the most terrible judgments upon Julia; and calling for Madame de Menon, charged her with having insulted her holy religion, in being accessory to the flight of Julia. Madame endured these reproaches with calm dignity, and preserved a steady silence; but she secretly determined to leave the monastery, and seek in another, the repose which she could never hope to find in this.

The

The report of Julia's disappearance spread rapidly beyond the walls, and soon reached the ears of the marquis, who rejoiced in the circumstance, believing that she must now inevitably fall into his hands.

After his people, in obedience to his orders, had carefully searched the surrounding woods and rocks, he withdrew them from the abbey; and having dispersed them various ways in search of Julia, he returned to the castle of Mazzini. Here new vexation awaited him, for he now first learned that Ferdinand had escaped from confinement.

The mystery of Julia's flight was now dissolved; for it was evident by whose means she had effected it, and the marquis issued orders to his people to secure Ferdinand wherever he should be found.



## CHAPTER XIII.

**H**IPPOLITUS, who had languished under a long and dangerous illness occasioned by his wounds, but heightened and prolonged by the distress of his mind, was detained in a small town on the coast of Calabria, and was yet ignorant of the death of Cornelia. He scarcely doubted that Julia was now devoted to the duke, and this thought was at times poison to his heart. After his arrival in Calabria, immediately on the recovery of his senses, he dispatched a servant back to the castle of Mazzini, to gain secret intelligence of what had passed after his departure. The eagerness with which we endeavour to escape from misery, taught him to encourage a remote and romantic hope, that Julia yet lived for him. Yet even this hope at length languished into despair, as the time elapsed which should have

have brought his servant from Sicily. Days and weeks passed away in the utmost anxiety to Hippolitus, for still his emissary did not appear; and at last, concluding that he had been either seized by robbers, or discovered and detained by the marquis, the count sent off a second emissary to the castle of Mazzini. By him he learned the news of Julia's flight, and his heart dilated with joy; but it was suddenly checked, when he heard the marquis had discovered her retreat in the abbey of St. Augustin. The wounds which still detained him in confinement, now became intolerable. Julia might yet be lost to him for ever. But even his present state of fear and uncertainty was bliss, compared with the anguish of despair which his mind had long endured.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he quitted Italy for Sicily, in the design of visiting the monastery of St. Augustin, where it was possible Julia might

might yet remain. That he might pass with the secrecy necessary to his plan, and escape the attacks of the marquis, he left his servants in Calabria and embarked alone.

It was morning when he landed at a small port of Sicily, and proceeded towards the abbey of St. Augustin. As he travelled, his imagination revolved the scenes of his early love, the distress of Julia, and the sufferings of Ferdinand, and his heart melted at the retrospect. He considered the probabilities of Julia's having found protection from her father in the pity of the *Padre Abate*; and even ventured to indulge himself in a flattering, fond anticipation of the moment, when Julia should again be restored to his sight.

He arrived at the monastery, and his grief may easily be imagined, when he was informed of the death of his beloved sister, and of the flight of Julia. He quitted St. Augustin's immediately, without



without even knowing that Madame de Menon was there, and set out for a town at some leagues distance, where he designed to pass the night.

Absorbed in the melancholy reflections which the late intelligence excited, he gave the reins to his horse, and journeyed on unmindful of his way. The evening was far advanced, when he discovered that he had taken a wrong direction, and that he was bewildered in a wild and solitary scene. He had wandered too far from the road to hope to regain it, and he had beside no recollection of the objects left behind him. A choice of errors, only, lay before him. The view on his right hand exhibited high and savage mountains, covered with heath and black fir; and the wild desolation of their aspect, together with the dangerous appearance of the path that wound up their sides, and which was the only apparent track they afforded, determined Hippolitus not to attempt their

ascent. On his left lay a forest, to which the path he was then in led; its appearance was gloomy, but he preferred it to the mountains; and since he was uncertain of its extent, there was a possibility that he might pass it, and reach a village before the night was set in. At the worst, the forest would afford him a shelter from the winds; and however he might be bewildered in its labyrinths, he could ascend a tree, and rest in security till the return of light should afford him an opportunity of extricating himself. Among the mountains there was no possibility of meeting with other shelter, than what the habitation of man afforded, and such a shelter there was little probability of finding. Innumerable dangers also threatened him here, from which he would be secure on level ground.

Having determined which way to pursue, he pushed his horse into a gallop, and entered the forest as the last rays of the sun trembled on the moun-

tains. The thick foliage of the trees threw a gloom around, which was every moment deepened by the shades of evening. The path was uninterrupted, and the count continued to follow it till all distinction was confounded in the veil of night. Total darkness now made it impossible for him to pursue his way. He dismounted, and fastening his horse to a tree, climbed among the branches, purposing to remain there till morning.

He had not been long in this situation, when a confused sound of noises from a distance roused his attention. The sound returned at intervals for some time, but without seeming to approach. He descended from the tree, that he might be the better judge of the direction whence it came; but before he reached the ground, the noise was ceased, and all was profoundly silent. He continued to listen, but the silence remaining undisturbed, he began to think he had been deceived by the singing of the



wind among the leaves; and was preparing to re-ascend, when he perceived a faint light glimmer through the foliage from afar. The sight revived a hope that he was near some place of human habitation; he therefore unfastened his horse, and led him towards the spot whence the ray issued. The moon was now risen, and threw a checkered gleam over his path, sufficient to direct him.

Before he had proceeded far the light disappeared. He continued however his way as nearly as he could guess, towards the place whence it had issued; and after much toil, found himself in a spot where the trees formed a circle round a kind of rude lawn. The moonlight discovered to him an edifice which appeared to have been formerly a monastery, but which now exhibited a pile of ruins, whose grandeur, heightened by decay, touched the beholder with reverential awe. Hippolitus paused to gaze upon the scene; the sacred stillness of night increased

increased its effect, and a secret dread, he knew not wherefore, stole upon his heart.

The silence and the character of the place made him doubt whether this was the spot he had been seeking; and as he stood hesitating whether to proceed or to return, he observed a figure standing under an arch-way of the ruin; it carried a light in its hand, and passing silently along, disappeared in a remote part of the building. The courage of Hippolitus for a moment deserted him. An invincible curiosity, however, subdued his terror, and he determined to pursue, if possible, the way the figure had taken.

He passed over loose stones through a sort of court, till he came to the archway; here he stopped, for fear returned upon him. Resuming his courage, however, he went on, still endeavouring to follow the way the figure had passed, and suddenly found himself in

an enclosed part of the ruin, whose appearance was more mild and desolate than any he had yet seen. Seized with unconquerable apprehension, he was retiring, when the low voice of a distressed person struck his ear. His heart sunk at the sound, his limbs trembled, and he was utterly unable to move.

The sound, which appeared to be the last groan of a dying person, was repeated. Hippolitus made a strong effort, and sprang forward, when a light burst upon him from a shattered casement of the building, and at the same instant he heard the voices of men!

He advanced softly to the window, and beheld in a small room, which was less decayed than the rest of the edifice, a group of men, who from the savageness of their looks, and from their dress, appeared to be banditti. They surrounded a man who lay on the ground wounded, and bathed in blood, and who it was very evident had uttered the groans heard by the count. The



The obscurity of the place prevented Hippolitus from distinguishing the features of the dying man. From the blood which covered him, and from the surrounding circumstances, he appeared to be murdered; and the count had no doubt that the men he beheld were the murderers. The horror of the scene entirely overcame him; he stood rooted to the spot, and saw the assassins rifle the pockets of the dying person, who in a voice scarcely articulate, but which despair seemed to aid, supplicated for mercy. The ruffians answered him only with execrations, and continued their plunder. His groans and his sufferings served only to aggravate their cruelty. They were proceeding to take from him a miniature picture, which was fastened round his neck, and had been hitherto concealed in his bosom; when by a sudden effort he half raised himself from the ground, and attempted to save it from their hands. The effort availed him

nothing; a blow from one of the villains laid the unfortunate man on the floor without motion. The horrid barbarity of the act seized the mind of Hippolitus so entirely, that forgetful of his own situation, he groaned aloud, and started with an instantaneous design of avenging the deed. The noise he made alarmed the banditti, who looking whence it came, discovered the count through the casement. They instantly quitted their prize, and rushed towards the door of the room. He was now returned to a sense of his danger, and endeavoured to escape to the exterior part of the ruin; but terror bewildered his senses, and he mistook his way. Instead of regaining the archway, he perplexed himself with fruitless wanderings, and at length found himself only more deeply involved in the secret recesses of the pile.

The steps of his pursuers gained fast upon him, and he continued to perplex himself

himself with vain efforts at escape, till at length, quite exhausted, he sunk on the ground, and endeavoured to resign himself to his fate. He listened with a kind of stern despair, and was surprised to find all silent. On looking round, he perceived by a ray of moon-light which streamed through a part of the ruin from above, that he was in a sort of vault, which from the small means he had of judging, he thought was extensive.

In this situation he remained for a considerable time, ruminating on the means of escape, yet scarcely believing escape was possible. If he continued in the vault, he might continue there only to be butchered; but by attempting to rescue himself from the place he was now in, he must rush into the hands of the banditti. Judging it, therefore, the safer way of the two to remain where he was, he endeavoured to await his fate with fortitude, when suddenly the loud



voices of the murderers burst upon his ear, and he heard steps advancing quickly towards the spot where he lay.

Despair instantly renewed his vigour; he started from the ground, and throwing round him a look of eager desperation, his eye caught the glimpse of a small door, upon which the moon-beam now fell. He made towards it, and passed it just as the light of a torch gleamed upon the walls of the vault.

He groped his way along a winding passage, and at length came to a flight of steps. Notwithstanding the darkness he reached the bottom in safety.

He now for the first time stopped to listen — the sounds of pursuit were ceased, and all was silent! Continuing to wander on in ineffectual endeavours to escape, his hands at length touched cold iron, and he quickly perceived it belonged to a door. The door, however, was fastened, and resisted all his efforts to open it. He was giving up the attempt

tempt in despair, when a loud scream from within, followed by a dead and heavy noise, roused all his attention. Silence ensued. He listened for a considerable time at the door, his imagination filled with images of horror, and expecting to hear the sound repeated. He then sought for a decayed part of the door, through which he might discover what was beyond; but he could find none; and after waiting some time without hearing any farther noise, he was quitting the spot, when in passing his arm over the door, it struck against something hard. On examination he perceived to his extreme surprize that the key was in the lock. For a moment he hesitated what to do; but curiosity overcame other considerations, and with a trembling hand he turned the key. The door opened into a large and desolate apartment, dimly lighted by a lamp that stood on a table, which was almost the only furniture of the

place. The count had advanced several steps before he perceived an object, which fixed all his attention. This was the figure of a young woman lying on the floor apparently dead. Her face was concealed in her robe; and the long auburn tresses which fell in beautiful luxuriance over her bosom, served to veil a part of the glowing beauty which the disorder of her dress would have revealed.

Pity, surprize, and admiration struggled in the breast of Hippolitus; and while he stood surveying the object which excited these different emotions, he heard a step advancing towards the room. He flew to the door by which he had entered, and was fortunate enough to reach it before the entrance of the persons whose steps he heard. Having turned the key, he stopped at the door to listen to their proceedings. He distinguished the voices of two men, and knew them to be those



those of the assassins. Presently he heard a piercing shriek, and at the same instant the voices of the ruffians grew loud and violent. One of them exclaimed that the lady was dying, and accused the other of having frightened her to death, swearing with horrid imprecations that she was his, and he would defend her to the last drop of his blood. The dispute grew higher; and neither of the ruffians would give up his claim to the unfortunate object of their altercation.

The clashing of swords was soon after heard, together with a violent noise. The screams were repeated, and the oaths and execrations of the disputants redoubled. They seemed to move towards the door, behind which Hippolitus was concealed; suddenly the door was shook with great force, a deep groan followed, and was instantly succeeded by a noise like that of a person whose whole weight falls at once to the ground,

For

For a moment all was silent. Hippolitus had no doubt that one of the ruffians had destroyed the other, and was soon confirmed in the belief—for the survivor triumphed with brutal exultation over his fallen antagonist. The ruffian hastily quitted the room, and Hippolitus soon after heard the distant voices of several persons in loud dispute. The sounds seemed to come from a chamber over the place where he stood; he also heard a trampling of feet from above, and could even distinguish, at intervals, the words of the disputants. From these he gathered enough to learn that the affray which had just happened, and the lady who had been the occasion of it, were the subjects of discourse. The voices frequently rose together, and confounded all distinction.

At length the tumult began to subside, and Hippolitus could distinguish what was said. The ruffians agreed to give up the lady in question to him who  
 had

had fought for her ; and leaving him to his prize, they all went out in quest of farther prey. The situation of the unfortunate lady excited a mixture of pity and indignation in Hippolitus, which for some time entirely occupied him ; he revolved the means of extricating her from so deplorable a situation, and in these thoughts almost forgot his own danger. He now heard her sighs ; and while his heart melted to the sounds, the farther door of the apartment was thrown open, and the wretch to whom she had been allotted, rushed in. Her screams now redoubled, but they were of no avail with the ruffian who had seized her in his arms ; when the count, who was unarmed, insensible to every impulse but that of a generous pity, burst into the room, but became fixed like a statue when he beheld his Julia struggling in the grasp of the ruffian. On discovering Hippolitus, she made a sudden spring, and liberated herself ; when,

running



running to him, she sunk lifeless in his arms.

Surprize and fury sparkled in the eyes of the ruffian, and he turned with a savage desperation upon the count; who, relinquishing Julia, snatched up the sword of the dead ruffian, which lay upon the floor, and defended himself. The combat was furious, but Hippolitus laid his antagonist senseless at his feet. He flew to Julia, who now revived, but who for some time could speak only by her tears. The transitions of various and rapid sensations, which her heart experienced, and the strangely mingled emotions of joy and terror that agitated Hippolitus, can only be understood by experience. He raised her from the floor, and endeavoured to soothe her to composure, when she called wildly upon Ferdinand. At his name the count started, and instantly remembered the dying cavalier, whose countenance the glooms had concealed from

from his view. His heart thrilled with secret agony, yet he resolved to withhold his terrible conjectures from Julia, of whom he learned that Ferdinand, with herself, had been taken by banditti in the way from the villa which had offered them so hospitable a reception after the ship-wreck. They were on the road to a port whence they designed again to embark for Italy, when this misfortune overtook them. Julia added that Ferdinand had been immediately separated from her ; and that, for some hours, she had been confined in the apartment where Hippolitus found her.

The count with difficulty concealed his terrible apprehensions for Ferdinand, and vainly strove to soften Julia's distress. But there was no time to be lost—they had yet to find a way out of the edifice, and before they could accomplish this, the banditti might return. It was also possible that some of the party were left to watch this their  
abode

abode during the absence of the rest, and this was another circumstance of reasonable alarm.

After some little consideration, Hippolitus judged it most prudent to seek an outlet through the passage by which he entered; he therefore took the lamp, and led Julia to the door. They entered the avenue, and locking the door after them, sought the flight of steps down which the count had before passed; but having pursued the windings of the avenue a considerable time without finding them, he became certain he had mistaken the way. They, however, found another flight, which they descended, and entered upon a passage so very narrow and low, as not to admit of a person walking upright. This passage was closed by a door, which on examination was found to be chiefly of iron. Hippolitus was startled at the sight, but on applying his strength found it gradually yield, when the im-  
prisoned



prisoned air rushed out, and had nearly extinguished the light. They now entered upon a dark abyfs; and the door, which moved upon a spring, suddenly closed upon them. On looking round they beheld a large vault; and it is not easy to imagine their horror on discovering they were in a receptacle for the murdered bodies of the unfortunate people who had fallen into the hands of the banditti.

The count could scarcely support the fainting spirits of Julia; he ran to the door, which he endeavoured to open, but the lock was so constructed that it could be moved only on the other side, and all his efforts were useless. He was constrained, therefore, to seek for another door, but could find none. Their situation was the most deplorable that can be imagined; for they were now inclosed in a vault strewn with the dead bodies of the murdered, and must there become the victims of famine, or of the sword. The earth was in several places  
thrown

thrown up, and marked the boundaries of new made graves. The bodies which remained unburied were probably left either from hurry or negligence, and exhibited a spectacle too shocking for humanity. The sufferings of Hippolitus were increased by those of Julia, who was sinking with horror, and who he endeavoured to support to a part of the vault which fell into a recess—where stood a bench.

They had not been long in this situation, when they heard a noise which approached gradually, and which did not appear to come from the avenue they had passed.

The noise increased, and they could distinguish voices. Hippolitus believed the murderers were returned; that they had traced his retreat, and were coming towards the vault by some way unknown to him. He prepared for the worst—and drawing his sword, resolved to defend Julia to the last. Their ap-

prehenſion, however, was ſoon diſſipated by a trampling of horſes, which ſound had occaſioned his alarm, and which now ſeemed to come from a court-yard above, extremely near the vault. He diſtinctly heard the voices of the banditti, together with the moans and ſuplications of ſome perſon, whom it was evident they were about to plunder. The ſound appeared ſo very near, that Hippolitus was both ſhocked and ſurprized; and looking round the vault, he perceived a ſmall grated window placed very high in the wall, which he concluded overlooked the place where the robbers were aſſembled. He recollected that his light might betray him; and horrible as was the alternative, he was compelled to extinguish it. He now attempted to climb to the grate, through which he might obtain a view of what was paſſing without. This at length he effected, for the ruggedneſs of the wall afforded him a footing. He beheld



beheld in a ruinous court, which was partially illuminated by the glare of torches, a group of banditti surrounding two persons who were bound on horse-back, and who were supplicating for mercy:

One of the robbers exclaiming with an oath that this was a golden night, bade his comrades dispatch, adding he would go to find Paulo and the lady.

The effect which the latter part of this sentence had upon the prisoners in the vault, may be more easily imagined than described. They were now in total darkness in this mansion of the murdered, without means of escape, and in momentary expectation of sharing a fate similar to that of the wretched objects around them. Julia overcome with distress and terror, sunk on the ground; and Hippolitus descending from the grate, became insensible of his own danger in his apprehension for her.

In a short time all without was confusion

sion and uproar; the ruffian who had left the court returned with the alarm that the lady was fled, and that Paulo was murdered. The robbers quitting their booty to go in search of the fugitive, and to discover the murderer, dreadful vociferations resounded through every recess of the pile.

The tumult had continued a considerable time, which the prisoners had passed in a state of horrible suspense, when they heard the uproar advancing towards the vault, and soon after a number of voices shouted down the avenue. The sound of steps quickened. Hippolitus again drew his sword, and placed himself opposite the entrance, where he had not stood long, when a violent push was made against the door; it flew open, and a party of men rushed into the vault.

Hippolitus kept his position, protesting he would destroy the first who approached. At the sound of his voice they

they stopped; but presently advancing, commanded him in the king's name to surrender. He now discovered what his agitation had prevented him from observing sooner, that the men before him were not banditti, but the officers of justice. They had received information of this haunt of villany from the son of a Sicilian nobleman, who had fallen into the hands of the banditti, and had afterwards escaped from their power.

The officers came attended by a guard, and were every way prepared to prosecute a strenuous search through these horrible recesses.

Hippolitus inquired for Ferdinand, and they all quitted the vault in search of him. In the court, to which they now ascended, the greater part of the banditti were secured by a number of the guard. The count accused the robbers of having secreted his friend, whom he described, and demanded to have liberated.

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With one voice they denied the fact, and were resolute in persisting that they knew nothing of the person described. This denial confirmed Hippolitus in his former terrible surmise; that the dying cavalier whom he had seen, was no other than Ferdinand, and he became furious. He bade the officers prosecute their search, who, leaving a guard over the banditti they had secured, followed him to the room where the late dreadful scene had been acted.

The room was dark and empty; but the traces of blood were visible on the floor; and Julia, though ignorant of the particular apprehension of Hippolitus, almost swooned at the sight. On quitting the room they wandered for some time among the ruins, without discovering any thing extraordinary, till, in passing under the arch-way by which Hippolitus had first entered the building, their footsteps returned a deep sound, which convinced them that the ground

was hollow. On close examination, they perceived by the light of their torch, a trap door, which with some difficulty they lifted, and discovered beneath a narrow flight of steps. They all descended into a low winding passage, where they had not been long, when they heard a trampling of horses above, and a loud and sudden uproar.

The officers apprehending that the banditti had overcome the guard, rushed back to the trap-door, which they had scarcely lifted, when they heard a clashing of swords, and a confusion of unknown voices. Looking onward, they beheld through the arch, in an inner sort of court, a large party of banditti who were just arrived, rescuing their comrades, and contending furiously with the guard.

On observing this, several of the officers sprang forward to the assistance of their friends; and the rest, subdued by cowardice, hurried down the steps, letting

letting the trap door fall after them with a thundering noise. They gave notice to Hippolitus of what was passing above, who hurried Julia along the passage in search of some outlet or place of concealment. They could find neither; and had not long pursued the windings of the way, when they heard the trap-door lifted, and the steps of persons descending. Despair gave strength to Julia, and winged her flight. But they were now stopped by a door which closed the passage, and the sound of distant voices murmured along the walls.

The door was fastened by strong iron bolts, which Hippolitus vainly endeavoured to draw. The voices drew near. After much labour and difficulty the bolts yielded—the door unclosed—and light dawned upon them through the mouth of a cave, into which they now entered. On quitting the cave they found themselves in the forest, and in a short time

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reached



reached the borders. They now ventured to stop, and looking back perceived no person in pursuit.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**W**HEN Julia was rested, they followed the track before them, and in a short time arrived at a village where they obtained security and refreshment.

But Julia, whose mind was occupied with dreadful anxiety for Ferdinand, became indifferent to all around her. Even the presence of Hippolitus, which but lately would have raised her from misery to joy, failed to soothe her distress. The steady and noble attachment of her brother had sunk deep in her heart, and reflection only aggravated her affliction. Yet the handitti had steadily persisted in affirming that he was not concealed in their recesses ; and this circumstance, which threw a deeper shade over the fears of Hippolitus, imparted a glimmering of hope to the mind of Julia.

A more immediate interest at length forced her mind from this sorrowful subject. It was necessary to determine upon some line of conduct, for she was now in an unknown spot, and ignorant of any place of refuge. The count, who trembled at the dangers which environed her, and at the probabilities he saw of her being torn from him for ever, suffered a consideration of them to overcome the dangerous delicacy which at this mournful period required his silence. He entreated her to destroy the possibility of separation, by consenting to become his immediately. He urged that a priest could be easily procured from a neighbouring convent, who would confirm the bonds which had so long united their hearts, and who would thus at once arrest the destiny that so long had threatened his hopes.

This proposal, though similar to the one she had before accepted; and though the certain means of rescuing her from  
the



the fate she dreaded, she now turned from in sorrow and dejection. She loved Hippolitus with a steady and tender affection, which was still heightened by the gratitude he claimed as her deliverer; but she considered it a profanation of the memory of that brother who had suffered so much for her sake, to mingle joy with the grief which her uncertainty concerning him occasioned. She softened her refusal with a tender grace, that quickly dissipated the jealous doubt arising in the mind of Hippolitus, and increased the fond admiration of her character.

She desired to retire for a time to some obscure convent, there to await the issue of the event, which at present involved her in perplexity and sorrow.

Hippolitus struggled with his feelings, and forbore to press farther the suit on which his happiness, and almost his existence, now depended. He inquired

at the village for a neighbouring convent, and was told, that there was none within twelve leagues, but that near the town of Palini, at about that distance were two. He procured horses; and leaving the officers to return to Palermo for a stronger guard, he, accompanied by Julia, entered on the road to Palini.

Julia was silent and thoughtful; Hippolitus gradually sunk into the same mood, and he often cast a cautious look around as they travelled for some hours along the feet of the mountains. They stopped to dine under the shade of some beech trees; for, fearful of discovery, Hippolitus had provided against the necessity of entering many inns. Having finished their repast, they pursued their journey; but Hippolitus now began to doubt whether he was in the right direction. Being destitute, however, of the means of certainty upon this point, he followed the road before him,

him, which now wound up the side of a steep hill, whence they descended into a rich valley, where the shepherd's pipe sounded sweetly from afar among the hills. The evening sun shed a mild and mellow lustre over the landscape, and softened each feature with a vermil glow that would have inspired a mind less occupied than Julia's, with sensations of congenial tranquillity.

The evening now closed in; and as they were doubtful of the road, and found it would be impossible to reach Palini that night, they took the way to a village, which they perceived at the extremity of the valley.

They had proceeded about half a mile, when they heard a sudden shout of voices echoed from among the hills behind them; and looking back perceived faintly through the dusk a party of men on horseback making towards them. As they drew nearer, the words they spoke were distinguishable, and

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Julia



Julia heard her own name sounded. Shocked at this circumstance, she had now no doubt that she was discovered by a party of her father's people, and she fled with Hippolitus along the valley. The pursuers, however, were almost come up with them, when they reached the mouth of a cavern, into which she ran for concealment. Hippolitus drew his sword; and awaiting his enemies, stood to defend the entrance.

In a few moments Julia heard the clashing of swords. Her heart trembled for Hippolitus; and she was upon the point of returning to resign herself at once to the power of her enemies, and thus avert the danger that threatened him, when she distinguished the loud voice of the duke.

She shrunk involuntarily at the sound, and pursuing the windings of the cavern, fled into its inmost recesses. Here she had not been long when the voices  
sounded

founded through the cave, and drew near. It was now evident that Hippolitus was conquered, and that her enemies were in search of her. She threw round a look of unutterable anguish, and perceived very near, by a sudden gleam of torch-light, a low and deep recess in the rock. The light which belonged to her pursuers, grew stronger; and she entered the rock on her knees, for the overhanging craggs would not suffer her to pass otherwise; and having gone a few yards, perceived that it was terminated by a door. The door yielded to her touch, and she suddenly found herself in a highly vaulted cavern, which received a feeble light from the moon beams that streamed through an opening in the rock above.

She closed the door, and paused to listen. The voices grew louder, and more distinct, and at last approached so near, that she distinguished what was said. Above the rest she heard the

voice of the duke. "It is impossible she can have quitted the cavern," said he, "and I will not leave it till I have found her. Seek to the left of that rock, while I examine beyond this point."

These words were sufficient for Julia; she fled from the door across the cavern before her, and having ran a considerable way, without coming to a termination, stopped to breathe. All was now still; and as she looked around, the gloomy obscurity of the place struck upon her fancy all its horrors. She imperfectly surveyed the vastness of the cavern in wild amazement, and feared that she had precipitated herself again into the power of banditti, for whom alone this place appeared a fit receptacle. Having listened a long time without hearing a return of voices, she thought to find the door by which she had entered, but the gloom, and vast extent of the cavern, made the endeavour hopeless, and the attempt unsuccessful. Having wander-  
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ed a considerable time through the void, she gave up the effort, endeavoured to resign herself to her fate, and to compose her distracted thoughts. The remembrance of her former wonderful escape inspired her with confidence in the mercy of God. But Hippolitus and Ferdinand were now both lost to her—lost, perhaps for ever—and the uncertainty of their fate gave force to fancy, and poignancy to sorrow.

Towards morning grief yielded to nature, and Julia sunk to repose. She was awakened by the sun, whose rays darting obliquely through the opening in the rock, threw a partial light across the cavern. Her senses were yet bewildered by sleep, and she started in affright on beholding her situation; as recollection gradually stole upon her mind, her sorrows returned, and she sickened at the fatal retrospect.

She arose, and renewed her search for an outlet. The light, imperfect as it was,

was, now assisted her, and she found a door, which she perceived was not the one by which she had entered. It was firmly fastened; she discovered, however, the bolts and the lock that held it, and at length unclosed the door. It opened upon a dark passage, which she entered.

She groped along the winding walls for some time, when she perceived the way was obstructed. She now discovered that another door interrupted her progress, and sought for the bolts which might fasten it. These she found; and strengthened by desperation forced them back. The door opened, and she beheld in a small room, which received its feeble light from a window above, the pale and emaciated figure of a woman, seated, with half closed eyes, in a kind of elbow chair. On perceiving Julia, she started from her seat, and her countenance expressed a wild surprize. Her features, which were worn by sorrow, still retained

tained the traces of beauty, and in her air was a mild dignity that excited in Julia an involuntary veneration.

She seemed as if about to speak, when fixing her eyes earnestly and steadily upon Julia, she stood for a moment in eager gaze, and suddenly exclaiming, "My daughter!" fainted away.

The astonishment of Julia would scarcely suffer her to assist the lady, who lay senseless on the floor. A multitude of strange imperfect ideas rushed upon her mind, and she was lost in perplexity; but as she examined the features of the stranger; which were now re-kindling into life, she thought she discovered the resemblance of Emilia!

The lady breathing a deep sigh, unclosed her eyes; she raised them to Julia, who hung over her in speechless astonishment, and fixing them upon her with a tender earnest expression—they filled with tears. She pressed Julia to her heart, and a few moments of exquisite,



quisite, unutterable emotion followed. When the lady became more composed, "Thank heaven!" said she, "my prayer is granted. I am permitted to embrace one of my children before I die. Tell me what brought you hither. Has the marquis at last relented, and allowed me once more to behold you, or has his death dissolved my wretched bondage?"

Truth now glimmered upon the mind of Julia, but so faintly, that instead of enlightening, it served only to increase her perplexity.

"Is the marquis Mazzini living?" continued the lady. These words were not to be doubted; Julia threw herself at the feet of her mother, and embracing her knees in an energy of joy, answered only in sobs.

The marchioness eagerly inquired after her children, "Emilia is living," answered Julia, "but my dear brother—" "Tell me," cried the marchioness, with quickness. An explanation ensued.

When

When she was informed concerning Ferdinand, she sighed deeply, and raising her eyes to heaven, endeavoured to assume a look of pious resignation; but the struggle of maternal feeling was visible in her countenance, and almost overcame her powers of resistance.

Julia gave a short account of the preceding adventures, and of her entrance into the cavern; and found to her inexpressible surprize, that she was now in a subterranean abode belonging to the southern buildings of the castle of Mazzini! The marchioness was beginning her narrative, when a door was heard to unlock above, and the sound of a footstep followed.

“Fly!” cried the marchioness, “secrete yourself if possible, for the marquis is coming.” Julia’s heart sunk at these words; she paused not a moment, but retired through the door by which she had entered. This she had scarcely done, when another door of the cell

was

was unlocked, and she heard the voice of her father. Its sounds thrilled her with a universal tremour; the dread of discovery so strongly operated upon her mind, that she stood in momentary expectation of seeing the door of the passage unclosed by the marquis; and she was deprived of all power of seeking refuge in the cavern.

At length the marquis, who came with food, quitted the cell, and relocked the door, when Julia stole forth from her hiding place. The marchioness again embraced, and wept over her daughter. The narrative of her sufferings upon which she now entered, entirely dissipated the mystery which had so long enveloped the southern buildings of the castle.

“ Oh! why,” said the marchioness, “ is it my task to discover to my daughter the vices of her father? In relating my sufferings, I reveal his crimes! It is now about fifteen years, as near as I can guess



guess from the small means I have of judging, since I entered this horrible abode. My sorrows, alas! began not here; they commenced at an earlier period. But it is sufficient to observe, that the passion whence originated all my misfortunes, was discovered by me long before I experienced its most baleful effects."

Seven years had elapsed since my marriage, when the charms of Maria de Vellorno, a young lady singularly beautiful, inspired the marquis with a passion as violent as it was irregular. I observed with deep and silent anguish, the cruel indifference of my lord towards me, and the rapid progress of his passion for another. I severely examined my past conduct, which I am thankful to say presented a retrospect of only blameless actions; and I endeavoured by meek submission, and tender assiduities, to recall that affection which was, alas! gone for ever. My meek submission

was

was considered as the mark of a servile and insensible mind ; and my tender affiduities, to which his heart no longer responded, created only disgust, and exalted the proud spirit it was meant to conciliate.

“ The secret grief which this change occasioned, consumed my spirits, and preyed upon my constitution, till at length a severe illness threatened my life. I beheld the approach of death with a steady eye, and even welcomed it as the passport to tranquillity ; but it was destined that I should linger through new scenes of misery.

“ One day, which it appears was the paroxysm of my disorder, I sunk into a state of total torpidity, in which I lay for several hours. It is impossible to describe my feelings, when, on recovering, I found myself in this hideous abode. For some time I doubted my senses, and afterwards believed that I had quitted this world for another ; but  
I was

I was not long suffered to continue in my error, the appearance of the marquis bringing me to a perfect sense of my situation.

“ I now understood that I had been conveyed by his direction to this recess of horror, where it was his will I should remain. My prayers, my supplications were ineffectual; the hardness of his heart repelled my sorrows back upon myself; and as no entreaties could prevail upon him to inform me where I was, or of his reason for placing me here, I remained for many years ignorant of my vicinity to the castle, and of the motive for my confinement.

“ From that fatal day, until very lately, I saw the marquis no more—but was attended by a person who had been for some years dependent upon his bounty, and whom necessity, united to an insensible heart, had doubtless induced to accept this office. He generally brought me a week’s provisions, at  
stated



stated intervals, and I remarked that his visits were always in the night.

“ Contrary to my expectation, or my wish, nature did that for me which medicine had refused, and I recovered as if to punish with disappointment and anxiety my cruel tyrant. I afterwards learned, that in obedience to the marquis’s order, I had been carried to this spot by Vincent during the night, and that I had been buried in effigy at a neighbouring church, with all the pomp of funeral honour due to my rank.”

At the name of Vincent, Julia started; the doubtful words he had uttered on his death-bed were now explained—the cloud of mystery which had so long involved the southern buildings broke at once away: and each particular circumstance that had excited her former terror, arose to her view entirely unveiled by the words of the marchioness.—The long and total desertion of this part of the fabric—the light that had appeared through

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through the casement—the figure she had seen issue from the tower—the midnight noises she had heard—were circumstances evidently dependent on the imprisonment of the marchioness; the latter of which incidents were produced either by Vincent, or the marquis, in their attendance upon her.

When she considered the long and dreadful sufferings of her mother, and that she had for many years lived so near her ignorant of her misery, and even of her existence—she was lost in astonishment and pity.

“ My days,” continued the marchioness, “ passed in a dead uniformity, more dreadful than the most acute vicissitudes of misfortune, and which would certainly have subdued my reason, had not those firm principles of religious faith, which I imbibed in early youth, enabled me to withstand the still, but forceful pressure of my calamity.

“ The insensible heart of Vincent at

length began to soften to my misfortunes. He brought me several articles of comfort, of which I had hitherto been destitute, and answered some questions I put to him concerning my family. To release me from my present situation, however his inclination might befriend me, was not to be expected, since his life would have paid the forfeiture of what would be termed his duty.

“ I now first discovered my vicinity to the castle. I learned also, that the marquis had married Maria de Vellorno, with whom he had resided at Naples, but that my daughters were left at Mazzini. This last intelligence awakened in my heart the throbs of warm maternal tenderness, and on my knees I supplicated to see them. So earnestly I entreated, and so solemnly I promised to return quietly to my prison, that at length, prudence yielded to pity, and Vincent consented to my request.

“ On the following day he came to  
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the cell, and informed me my children were going into the woods, and that I might see them from a window near which they would pass. My nerves thrilled at these words, and I could scarcely support myself to the spot I so eagerly sought. He led me through long and intricate passages, as I guessed by the frequent turnings, for my eyes were bound till I reached a hall of the south buildings. I followed to a room above, where the full light of day once more burst upon my sight, and almost overpowered me. Vincent placed me by a window, which looked towards the woods. Oh! what moments of painful impatience were those in which I waited your arrival!"

"At length you appeared. I saw you—I saw my children—and was neither permitted to clasp them to my heart, or to speak to them! You was leaning on the arm of your sister, and your countenances spoke the sprightly,

happy innocence of youth.—Alas ! you knew not the wretched fate of your mother, who then gazed upon you ! Although you were at too great a distance for my weak voice to reach you, with the utmost difficulty I avoided throwing open the window, and endeavouring to discover myself. The remembrance of my solemn promise, and that the life of Vincent would be sacrificed by the act, alone restrained me. I struggled for some time with emotions too powerful for my nature, and fainted away.

“ On recovering I called wildly for my children, and went to the window—but you were gone ! Not all the entreaties of Vincent could for some time remove me from this station, where I waited in the fond expectation of seeing you again—but you appeared no more ! At last I returned to my cell in an ecstasy of grief which I tremble even to remember.

“ This interview, so eagerly sought, and so reluctantly granted, proved a  
source

source of new misery — instead of calming, it agitated my mind with a restless, wild despair, which bore away my strongest powers of resistance. I raved incessantly of my children, and incessantly solicited to see them again— Vincent, however, had found but too much cause to repent of his first indulgence, to grant me a second.

“ About this time a circumstance occurred which promised me a speedy release from calamity. Above a week elapsed, and Vincent did not appear. My little stock of provision was exhausted, and I had been two days without food, when I again heard the doors that led to my prison creek on their hinges. An unknown step approached, and in a few minutes the marquis entered my cell! My blood was chilled at the sight, and I closed my eyes as I hoped for the last time. The sound of his voice recalled me. His countenance was dark and sullen, and I perceived that he



trembled. He informed me that Vincent was no more, and that henceforward his office he should take upon himself. I forbore to reproach—where reproach would only have produced new sufferings, and withheld supplication where it would have exasperated conscience and inflamed revenge. My knowledge of the marquis's second marriage I concealed.

“ He usually attended me when night might best conceal his visits; though these were irregular in their return. Lately, from what motive I cannot guess, he has ceased his nocturnal visits, and comes only in the day.

“ Once when midnight increased the darkness of my prison, and seemed to render silence even more awful, touched by the sacred horrors of the hour, I poured forth my distress in loud lamentation. Oh! never can I forget what I felt, when I heard a distant voice answer to my moan! A wild surprize, which  
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was strangely mingled with hope, seized me, and in my first emotion I should have answered the call, had not a recollection crossed me, which destroyed at once every half-raised sensation of joy. I remembered the dreadful vengeance which the marquis had sworn to execute upon me, if I ever, by any means, endeavoured to make known the place of my concealment; and though life had long been a burthen to me, I dared not to incur the certainty of being murdered. I also well knew that no person who might discover my situation could effect my enlargement; for I had no relations to deliver me by force, and the marquis you know, has not only power to imprison, but also the right of life and death in his own domains. I, therefore, forbore to answer the call, though I could not entirely repress my lamentation. I long perplexed myself with endeavouring to account for this strange circumstance, and am to this moment ignorant of its cause."

Julia remembering that Ferdinand had been confined in a dungeon of the castle, it instantly occurred to her that his prison and that of the marchioness, were not far distant; and she scrupled not to believe that it was his voice which her mother had heard. She was right in this belief, and it was indeed the marchioness whose groans had formerly caused Ferdinand so much alarm, both in the marble hall of the south buildings, and in his dungeon.

When Julia communicated her opinion, and the marchioness believed that she had heard the voice of her son—her emotion was extreme, and it was some time before she could resume her narration.

“A short time since,” continued the marchioness, “the marquis brought me a fortnight’s provision, and told me that I should probably see him no more till the expiration of that term. His absence at this period you have explained  
in



in your account of the transactions at the abbey of St. Augustin. How can I ever sufficiently acknowledge the obligations I owe to my dear and invaluable friend Madam de Menon! Oh! that it might be permitted me to testify my gratitude."

Julia attended to the narrative of her mother in silent astonishment, and gave all the sympathy which sorrow could demand. "Surely," cried she, "the providence on whom you have so firmly relied, and whose inflictions you have supported with a fortitude so noble, has conducted me through a labyrinth of misfortunes to this spot, for the purpose of delivering you! Oh! let us hasten to fly this horrid abode—let us seek to escape through the cavern by which I entered."

She paused in earnest expectation awaiting a reply. "Whither can I fly?" said the marchioness, deeply sighing. This question, spoken with the emphasis of despair, affected Julia to tears, and she was for a while silent.

“ The marquis,” resumed Julia, would not know where to seek you, or if he found you beyond his own domains, would fear to claim you. A convent may afford for the present a safe asylum; and whatever shall happen, surely no fate you may hereafter encounter can be more dreadful than the one you now experience.”

The marchioness assented to the truth of this, yet her broken spirits, the effect of long sorrow and confinement, made her hesitate how to act; and there was a kind of placid despair in her look, which too faithfully depicted her feelings. It was obvious to Julia that the cavern she had passed wound beneath the range of mountains on whose opposite side stood the castle of Mazzini. The hills thus rising formed a screen which must entirely conceal their emergence from the mouth of the cave, and their flight, from those in the castle. She represented these circumstances to her

her mother, and urged them so forcibly, that the lethargy of despair yielded to hope, and the marchioness committed herself to the conduct of her daughter.

“ Oh ! let me lead you to light and life ! ” cried Julia with warm enthusiasm.

“ Surely heaven can bless me with no greater good than by making me the deliverer of my mother. ” They both knelt down ; and the marchioness with that affecting eloquence which true piety inspires, and with that confidence which had supported her through so many miseries, committed herself to the protection of God, and implored his favour on their attempt.

They arose, but as they conversed farther on their plan, Julia recollected that she was destitute of money—the banditti having robbed her of all ! The sudden shock produced by this remembrance almost subdued her spirits ; never till this moment had she understood the value of money. But she



commanded her feelings, and resolved to conceal this circumstance from the marchioness, preferring the chance of any evil they might encounter from without, to the certain misery of this terrible imprisonment.

Having taken what provision the marquis had brought, they quitted the cell, and entered upon the dark passage, along which they passed with cautious steps. Julia came first to the door of the cavern, but who can paint her distress when she found it was fastened ! All her efforts to open it were ineffectual. —The door which had closed after her, was held by a spring lock, and could be opened on this side only with a key. When she understood this circumstance the marchioness, with a placid resignation which seemed to exalt her above humanity, addressed herself again to heaven, and turned back to her cell. Here Julia indulged without reserve, and without scruple, the excess of her grief. The marchioness wept over her.

“Not for myself,” said she, “do I grieve, —I have too long been inured to misfortune to sink under its pressure. This disappointment is intrinsically, perhaps, little—for I had no certain refuge from calamity—and had it even been otherwise, a few years only of suffering would have been spared me. It is for you, Julia, who so much lament my fate; and who, in being thus delivered to the power of your father, are sacrificed to the Duke de Luervo—that my heart swells.”

Julia could make no reply, but by pressing to her lips the hand which was held forth to her, she saw all the wretchedness of her situation; and her fearful uncertainty concerning Hippolitus and Ferdinand, formed no inferior part of her affliction.

“If,” resumed the marchioness, “you prefer imprisonment with your mother, to a marriage with the duke, you may still secret yourself in the pas-

sage we have just quitted, and partake of the provision which is brought me."

"O ! talk not, madam, of a marriage with the duke," said Julia ; "surely any fate is preferable to that. But when I consider that in remaining here, I am condemned only to the sufferings which my mother has so long endured, and that this confinement will enable me to soften, by tender sympathy, the asperity of her misfortunes, I ought to submit to my present situation with complacency, even did a marriage with the duke appear less hateful to me."

"Excellent girl !" exclaimed the marchioness, clasping Julia to her bosom ; "the sufferings you lament are almost repaid by this proof of your goodness and affection ! Alas ! that I should have been so long deprived of such a daughter !"

Julia now endeavoured to imitate the fortitude of her mother, and tenderly concealed her anxiety for Ferdinand and Hippolitus, the idea of whom incess-



incessantly haunted her imagination. When the marquis brought food to the cell, she retired to the avenue leading to the cavern, and escaped discovery.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER XV.

**T**HE marquis, meanwhile, whose indefatigable search after Julia failed of success, was successively the slave of alternate passions, and he poured forth the spleen of disappointment on his unhappy domestics.

The marchioness, who may now more properly be called Maria de Vellorno, inflamed, by artful insinuations, the passions already irritated, and heightened with cruel triumph his resentment towards Julia and Madame de Menon. She represented, what his feelings too acutely acknowledged,—that by the obstinate disobedience of the first, and the machinations of the last, a priest had been enabled to arrest his authority as a father—to insult the sacred honour of his nobility—and to overturn at once his proudest schemes of power and ambition. She declared it her opinion,  
that

that the *Abate* was acquainted with the place of Julia's present retreat, and upbraided the marquis with want of spirit in thus submitting to be outwitted by a priest, and forbearing an appeal to the pope, whose authority would compel the *Abate* to restore Julia.

This reproach stung the very soul of the marquis; he felt all its force, and was at the same time conscious of his inability to obviate it. The effect of his crimes now fell in severe punishment upon his own head. The threatened secret, which was no other than the imprisonment of the marchioness, arrested his arm of vengeance, and compelled him to submit to insult and disappointment. But the reproach of Maria sunk deep in his mind; it fomented his pride into redoubled fury, and he now repelled with disdain the idea of submission.

He revolved the means which might effect his purpose—he saw but one—this was the death of the marchioness.

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The commission of one crime often requires the perpetration of another. When once we enter on the labyrinth of vice, we can seldom return, but are led on through correspondent mazes to destruction. To obviate the effect of his first crime, it was now necessary the marquis should commit a second, and conceal the *imprisonment* of the marchioness by her *murder*. Himself the only living witness of her existence, when she was removed, the allegations of the *Padre Abate* would by this means be unsupported by any proof, and he might then boldly appeal to the pope for the restoration of his child.

He mused upon this scheme, and the more he accustomed his mind to contemplate it, the less scrupulous he became. The crime from which he would formerly have shrunk, he now surveyed with a steady eye. The fury of his passions, unaccustomed to resistance, uniting with the force of what ambition

termed necessity—urged him to the deed, and he determined upon the murder of his wife. The means of effecting his purpose were easy and various ; but as he was not yet so entirely hardened as to be able to view her dying pangs, and embrue his own hands in her blood, he chose to dispatch her by means of poison, which he resolved to mingle in her food.

But a new affliction was preparing for the marquis, which attacked him where he was most vulnerable ; and the veil which had so long overshadowed his reason was now to be removed. He was informed by Baptista of the infidelity of Maria de Vellorno. In the first emotion of passion, he spurned the informer from his presence, and disdained to believe the circumstance. A little reflection changed the object of his resentment ; he recalled the servant, whose faithfulness he had no reason to distrust, and condescended to interrogate him on the subject of his misfortune.

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He learned that an intimacy had for some time subsisted between Maria and the cavalier de Vincini; and that the assignation was usually held at the pavilion on the sea shore, in an evening. Baptista farther declared, that if the marquis desired a confirmation of his words, he might obtain it by visiting this spot at the hour mentioned.

This information lighted up the wildest passions of his nature; his former sufferings faded away before the stronger influence of the present misfortune, and it seemed as if he had never tasted misery till now. To suspect the wife upon whom he doated with romantic fondness, on whom he had centered all his firmest hopes of happiness, and for whose sake he had committed the crime which embittered even his present moment, and which would involve him in still deeper guilt—to find *her* ungrateful to his love, and a traitress to his honour—produced a misery more poignant than any his  
 imagination



imagination had conceived. He was torn by contending passions, and opposite resolutions:—now he resolved to expiate her guilt with her blood—and now he melted in all the softness of love. Vengeance and honor bade him strike to the heart which had betrayed him, and urged him instantly to the deed—when the idea of her beauty—her winning smiles—her fond endearments stole upon his fancy, and subdued his heart; he almost wept to the idea of injuring her, and in spite of appearances pronounced her faithful. The succeeding moment plunged him again in uncertainty; his tortures acquired new vigour from cessation, and again he experienced all the phrenzy of despair. He was now resolved to end his doubts by repairing to the pavilion; but again his heart wavered in irresolution how to proceed should his fears be confirmed. In the mean time he determined to watch the behaviour of Maria with severe vigilance.

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They met at dinner, and he observed her closely, but discovered not the smallest impropriety in her conduct. Her smiles and her beauty again wound their fascinations round his heart, and in the excess of their influence he was almost tempted to repair the injury which his late suspicions had done her, by confessing them at her feet. The appearance of the cavalier de Vincini, however, renewed his suspicions; his heart throbbed wildly, and with restless impatience he watched the return of evening, which would remove his suspense.

Night at length came. He repaired to the pavilion, and secreted himself among the trees that embowered it. Many minutes had not passed, when he heard a sound of low whispering voices steal from among the trees, and footsteps approaching down the alley. He stood almost petrified with terrible sensations, and presently heard some persons enter the pavilion. The marquis  
now

now emerged from his hiding place; a faint light issued from the building. He stole to the window, and beheld within, Maria and the cavalier de Vincini. Fired at the sight, he drew his sword, and sprang forward. The sound of his step alarmed the cavalier, who, on perceiving the marquis, rushed by him from the pavilion, and disappeared among the woods. The marquis pursued, but could not overtake him; and he returned to the pavilion with an intention of plunging his sword in the heart of Maria, when he discovered her senseless on the ground. Pity now suspended his vengeance; he paused in agonizing gaze upon her, and returned his sword into the scabbard.

She revived, but on observing the marquis, screamed and relapsed. He hastened to the castle for assistance, inventing, to conceal his disgrace, some pretence for her sudden illness, and she was conveyed to her chamber.

The



The marquis was now not suffered to doubt her infidelity, but the passion which her conduct abused, her faithlessness could not subdue; he still doated with absurd fondness, and even regretted that uncertainty could no longer flatter him with hope. It seemed as if his desire of her affection increased with his knowledge of the loss of it; and the very circumstance which should have roused his aversion, by a strange perversity of disposition, appeared to heighten his passion, and to make him think it impossible he could exist without her.

When the first energy of his indignation was subsided, he determined, therefore, to reprove and to punish, but hereafter to restore her to favour.

In this resolution he went to her apartment, and reprehended her falsehood in terms of just indignation.

Maria de Vellorno, in whom the late discovery had roused resentment, instead  
of

of awakening penitence; and exasperated pride without exciting shame,—heard the upbraidings of the marquis with impatience, and replied to them with acrimonious violence.

She boldly asserted her innocence, and instantly invented a story, the plausibility of which might have deceived a man who had evidence less certain than his senses to contradict it. She behaved with a haughtiness the most insolent; and when she perceived that the marquis was no longer to be misled, and that her violence failed to accomplish its purpose, she had recourse to tears and supplications. But the artifice was too glaring to succeed; and the marquis quitted her apartment in an agony of resentment.

His former fascinations, however, quickly returned, and again held him in suspension between love and vengeance. That the vehemence of his passion, however, might not want an object,

object, he ordered Baptista to discover the retreat of the cavalier de Vincini, on whom he meant to revenge his lost honour. Shame forbade him to employ others in the search.

This discovery suspended for a while the operations of the fatal scheme, which had before employed the thoughts of the marquis; but it had only suspended—not destroyed them. The late occurrence had annihilated his domestic happiness; but his pride now rose to rescue him from despair, and he centered all his future hopes upon ambition. In a moment of cool reflection, he considered that he had derived neither happiness or content from the pursuit of dissipated pleasures, to which he had hitherto sacrificed every opposing consideration. He resolved, therefore, to abandon the gay schemes of dissipation which had formerly allured him, and dedicate himself entirely to ambition, in the pursuits and delights of which  
he



he hoped to bury all his cares. He therefore became more earnest than ever for the marriage of Julia with the duke de Luovo, through whose means he designed to involve himself in the interests of the state, and determined to recover her at whatever consequence. He resolved without further delay to appeal to the pope; but to do this with safety, it was necessary that the marchioness should die; and he returned therefore to the consideration and execution of his diabolical purpose.

He mingled a poisonous drug with the food he designed for her; and when night arrived, carried it to the cell. As he unlocked the door, his hand trembled; and when he presented the food, and looked consciously for the last time upon the marchioness, who received it with humble thankfulness, his heart almost relented. His countenance, over which was diffused the paleness of death, expressed the secret movements

of his soul, and he gazed upon her with eyes of stiffened horror. Alarmed by his looks, she fell upon her knees to supplicate his pity.

Her attitude recalled his bewildered senses; and endeavouring to assume a tranquil aspect, he bade her rise, and instantly quitted the cell, fearful of the instability of his purpose. His mind was not yet sufficiently hardened by guilt to repel the arrows of conscience, and his imagination responded to her power. As he passed through the long dreary passages from the prison, solemn and mysterious sounds seemed to speak in every murmur of the blast which crept along their windings, and he often started and looked back.

He reached his chamber, and having shut the door, surveyed the room in fearful examination. Ideal forms flitted before his fancy, and for the first time in his life he feared to be alone. Shame only withheld him from calling Baptista.

tista. The gloom of the hour, and the death-like silence that prevailed, assisted the horrors of his imagination. He half repented of the deed, yet deemed it now too late to obviate it; and he threw himself on his bed in terrible emotion. His head grew dizzy, and a sudden faintness overcame him; he hesitated, and at length arose to ring for assistance, but found himself unable to stand.

In a few moments he was somewhat revived, and rang his bell; but before any person appeared, he was seized with terrible pains, and staggering to his bed, sunk senseless upon it. Here Baptista, who was the first person that entered his room, found him struggling, seemingly in the agonies of death. The whole castle was immediately roused, and the confusion may be more easily imagined than described. Emilia, amid the general alarm, came to her father's room, but the sight of him overcame her, and she was carried from his



presence. By the help of proper applications the marquis recovered his senses, and his pains had a short cessation.

"I am dying," said he, in a faltering accent; "send instantly for the marchioness and my son."

Ferdinand in escaping from the hands of the banditti, it was now seen had fallen into the power of his father. He had been since confined in an apartment of the castle, and was now liberated to obey the summons. The countenance of the marquis exhibited a ghastly image; Ferdinand, when he drew near the bed, suddenly shrunk back, overcome with horror. The marquis now beckoned his attendants to quit the room, and they were preparing to obey, when a violent noise was heard from without; almost in the same instant the door of the apartment was thrown open, and the servant who had been sent for the marchioness, rushed in. His look alone declared the horror of his mind,  
for

for words he had none to utter. He stared wildly, and pointed to the gallery he had quitted. Ferdinand, seized with new terror, rushed the way he pointed to the apartment of the marchioness. A spectacle of horror presented itself. Maria lay on a couch lifeless, and bathed in blood. A poignard, the instrument of her destruction, was on the floor; and it appeared from a letter which was found on the couch beside her, that she had died by her own hand. The paper contained these words:

TO THE MARQUIS DE MAZZINI.

“ YOUR words have stabbed my  
 “ heart. No power on earth could re-  
 “ store the peace you have destroyed.  
 “ I will escape from my torture. When  
 “ you read this, I shall be no more.  
 “ But the triumph shall no longer be

K 3

your's—

"your's—the draught you have drank  
"was given by the hand of the in-  
"jured

"MARIA DE MAZZINI."

"It now appeared that the marquis was poisoned by the vengeance of the woman for whom he had resigned his conscience. The consternation and distress of Ferdinand cannot easily be conceived: he hastened back to his father's chamber, but determined to conceal the dreadful catastrophe of Maria de Vellorno. This precaution, however, was useless; for the servants, in the consternation of terror, had revealed it, and the marquis had fainted.

Returning pains recalled his senses, and the agonies he suffered were too shocking for the beholders. Medical endeavours were applied, but the poison was too powerful for antidote. The marquis's pains at length subsided; the poison had exhausted most of its rage,  
and



and he became tolerably easy. He waved his hand for the attendants to leave the room ; and beckoning to Ferdinand, whose senses were almost stunned by this accumulation of horror, bade him sit down beside him. " The hand of death is now upon me," said he ; " I would employ these last moments in revealing a deed, which is more dreadful to me than all the bodily agonies I suffer. It will be some relief to me to discover it." Ferdinand grasped the hand of the marquis in speechless terror. " The retribution of heaven is upon me," resumed the marquis. " My punishment is the immediate consequence of my guilt. Heaven has made that woman the instrument of its justice, whom I made the instrument of my crimes ;—— that woman, for whose sake I forgot conscience, and braved vice—for whom I imprisoned an innocent wife, and afterwards murdered her."

At these words every nerve of Ferdi-

nand thrilled; he let go the marquis's hand, and started back. "Look not so fiercely on me," said the marquis, in a hollow voice; "your eyes strike death to my soul; my conscience needs not this additional pang:"—"My mother!" exclaimed Ferdinand—"my mother! Speak, tell me"—"I have no breath," said the marquis. "Oh!—Take these keys—the south tower—the trap-door.—"Tis possible—Oh!—"

The marquis made a sudden spring upwards, and fell lifeless on the bed. The attendants were called in, but he was gone for ever. His last words struck with the force of lightning upon the mind of Ferdinand; they seemed to say, that his mother might yet exist. He took the keys, and ordering some of the servants to follow, hastened to the southern building; he proceeded to the tower, and the trap-door beneath the stair-case was lifted. They all descended into a dark passage, which conducted them

them through several intricacies to the door of the cell. Ferdinand, in trembling horrible expectation, applied the key; the door opened, and he entered; but what was his surprize when he found no person in the cell! He concluded that he had mistaken the place, and quitted it for further search; but, having followed the windings of the passage, by which he entered, without discovering any other door, he returned to a more exact examination of the cell. He now observed the door which led to the cavern, and he entered upon the avenue, but no person was found there, and no voice answered to his call. Having reached the door of the cavern, which was fastened, he returned lost in grief, and meditating upon the last words of the marquis. He now thought that he had mistaken their import, and that the words "tis possible," were not meant to apply to the life of the marchioness. He concluded, that the



murder had been committed at a distant period; and he resolved, therefore, to have the ground of the cell dug up, and the remains of his mother sought for.

When the first violence of the emotions excited by the late scenes was subsided, he inquired concerning Maria de Vellorno.

It appeared that on the day preceding this horrid transaction, the marquis had passed some hours in her apartment; that they were heard in loud dispute;—that the passion of the marquis grew high;—that he upbraided her with her past conduct, and threatened her with a formal separation. When the marquis quitted her, she was heard walking quick through the room, in a passion of tears; she often suddenly stopped in vehement but incoherent exclamation; and at last threw herself on the floor, and was for some time entirely still. Here her woman found her, upon whose  
entrance

entrance she arose hastily, and reproved her for appearing un-called. After this she remained silent and sullen.

She descended to supper, where the marquis met her alone at table. Little was said during the repast, at the conclusion of which the servants were dismissed; and it was believed that during the interval between supper, and the hour of repose, Maria de Vellorno contrived to mingle poison with the wine of the marquis. How she had procured this poison was never discovered.

She retired early to her chamber; and her woman observing that she appeared much agitated, inquired if she was ill? To this she returned a short answer in the negative, and her woman was soon afterwards dismissed. But she had hardly shut the door of the room, when she heard her lady's voice recalling her. She returned, and received some trifling order, and observed that Maria looked uncommonly pale; there

was besides, a wildness in her eyes which frightened her, but she did not dare to ask any questions. She again quitted the room, and had only reached the extremity of the gallery, when her mistress's bell rang. She hastened back, Maria inquired if the marquis was gone to bed, and if all was quiet? Being answered in the affirmative, she replied, " This is a still hour and a dark one !— Good night !"

Her woman having once more left the room, stopped at the door to listen ; but all within remaining silent, she retired to rest.

It is probable that Maria perpetrated the fatal act soon after the dismissal of her woman ; for when she was found two hours afterwards, she appeared to have been dead some time. On examination a wound was discovered on her left side, which had doubtless penetrated to the heart, from the suddenness of her death, and from the effusion of blood which had followed.

These



These terrible events so deeply affected Emilia, that she was confined to her bed by a dangerous illness. Ferdinand struggled against the shock with manly fortitude. But amid all the tumult of the present scenes, his uncertainty concerning Julia, whom he had left in the hands of banditti, and whom he had been with-held from seeking or rescuing, formed perhaps the most affecting part of his distress.

The late marquis de Mazzini, and Maria de Vellorno, were interred with the honour due to their rank in the church of the convent of St. Nicolo. Their lives exhibited a boundless indulgence of violent and luxurious passions, and their deaths marked the consequences of such indulgence, and held forth to mankind a singular instance of Divine vengeance.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**I**N turning up the ground of the cell, it was discovered that it communicated with the dungeon in which Ferdinand had been confined, and where he had heard those groans which occasioned him so much terror.

The story which the marquis formerly related to his son concerning the southern buildings, it was now evident was fabricated for the purpose of concealing the imprisonment of the marchioness. In the choice of his subject, he certainly discovered some art; for the circumstance related was calculated, by impressing terror, to prevent farther inquiry into the recesses of these buildings. It served also to explain by supernatural evidence the cause of those sounds, and of that appearance which had been there observed, but which were in reality occasioned only by the marquis.

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The event of the examination in the cell threw Ferdinand into new perplexity. The marquis had confessed that he poisoned his wife—yet her remains were not to be found ; and the place which he signified to be that of her confinement, bore no vestige of her having been there. There appeared no way by which she could have escaped from her prison ; for both the door which opened upon the cell, and that which terminated the avenue beyond, were fastened when tried by Ferdinand.

But the young marquis had no time for useless speculation—serious duties called upon him. He believed that Julia was still in the power of banditti ; and on the conclusion of his father's funeral, he set forward himself to Palermo to give information of the abode of the robbers, and to repair with the officers of justice, accompanied by a party of his own people, to the rescue of his sister. On his arrival at Palermo he  
was



was informed that a banditti, whose retreat had been among the ruins of a monastery, situated in the forest of Marentino, was already discovered; that their abode had been searched, and themselves secured for examples of public justice—but that no captive lady had been found amongst them. This latter intelligence excited in Ferdinand a very serious distress, and he was wholly unable to conjecture her fate. He obtained leave, however, to interrogate those of the robbers, who were imprisoned at Palermo, but could draw from them no satisfactory or certain information.

At length he quitted Palermo for the forest of Marentino, thinking it possible that Julia might be heard of in its neighbourhood. He travelled on in melancholy and dejection, and evening overtook him long before he reached the place of his destination. The night came on heavily in clouds, and a violent

lent storm of wind and rain arose. The road lay through a wild and rocky country, and Ferdinand could obtain no shelter. His attendants offered him their cloaks, but he refused to expose a servant to the hardship he would not himself endure. He travelled for some miles in a heavy rain; and the wind, which howled mournfully among the rocks, and whose solemn pauses were filled by the distant roarings of the sea, heightened the desolation of the scene. At length he discerned amid the darkness from a-far, a red light waving in the wind: it varied with the blast, but never totally disappeared. He pushed his horse into a gallop, and made towards it.

The flame continued to direct his course; and on a nearer approach, he perceived, by the red reflection of its fires, fireaming a long radiance upon the waters beneath—a light-house situated upon a point of rock which over-

hung

hung the sea. He knocked for admittance, and the door was opened by an old man, who bade him welcome.

Within appeared a cheerful blazing fire, round which were seated several persons, who seemed like himself to have sought shelter from the tempest of the night. The sight of the fire cheered him, and he advanced towards it, when a sudden scream seized his attention; the company rose up in confusion, and in the same instant he discovered Julia and Hippolitus. The joy of that moment is not to be described, but his attention was quickly called off from his own situation to that of a lady, who during the general transport had fainted. His sensations on learning she was his mother can only be conceived.

She revived. "My son!" said she, in a languid voice, as she pressed him to her heart. "Great God, I am recompensed! Surely this moment may repay a life of misery!" He could only  
receive



receive her careſſes in ſilence; but the ſudden tears which ſtarted in his eyes, ſpoke a language too expreſſive to be miſunderſtood.

When the firſt emotion of the ſcene was paſſed, Julia inquired by what means Ferdinand had come to this ſpot. He answered her generally, and avoided for the preſent entering upon the affecting ſubject of the late events at the caſtle of Mazzini. Julia related the hiſtory of her adventures ſince ſhe parted with her brother. In her narration, it appeared that Hippolitus, who was taken by the duke de Luovo, at the mouth of the cave, had afterwards eſcaped, and returned to the cavern in ſearch of Julia. The low reſeſs in the rock, through which Julia had paſſed, he perceived by the light of his flambeau. He penetrated to the cavern beyond, and from thence to the priſon of the marchioneſs. No colour of language can paint the ſcene which followed; it is ſufficient to ſay that the whole  
party

party agreed to quit the cell at the return of night. But this being a night on which it was known the marquis would visit the prison, they agreed to defer their departure till after his appearance, and thus elude the danger to be expected from an early discovery of the escape of the marchioness.

At the sound of footsteps above, Hippolitus and Julia had secreted themselves in the avenue ; and immediately on the marquis's departure they all repaired to the cavern, leaving in the hurry of their flight untouched the poisonous food he had brought. Having escaped from thence they proceeded to a neighbouring village, where horses were procured to carry them towards Palermo. Here after a tedious journey they arrived, in the design of embarking for Italy. Contrary winds had detained them till the day on which Ferdinand left that city, when apprehensive and weary of delay, they hired a small vessel, and determined to brave  
the

the winds. They had soon reason to repent their temerity; for the vessel had not been long at sea when the storm arose, which threw them back upon the shores of Sicily, and brought them to the light-house, where they were discovered by Ferdinand.

On the following morning Ferdinand returned with his friends to Palermo, where he first disclosed the late fatal events of the castle. They now settled their future plans; and Ferdinand hastened to the castle of Mazzini to fetch Emilia, and to give orders for the removal of his household to his palace at Naples, where he designed to fix his future residence. The distress of Emilia, whom he found recovered from her indisposition, yielded to joy and wonder, when she heard of the existence of her mother, and the safety of her sister. She departed with Ferdinand for Palermo, where her friends awaited her, and where the joy of the meeting was considerably heightened by the appearance



of Madame de Menon, for whom the marchioness had dispatched a messenger to St. Augustin's. Madame had quitted the abbey for another convent, to which, however, the messenger was directed. This happy party now embarked for Naples.

From this period the castle of Mazzini, which had been the theatre of a dreadful catastrophe; and whose scenes would have revived in the minds of the chief personages connected with it, painful and shocking recollections—was abandoned.

On their arrival at Naples, Ferdinand presented to the king a clear and satisfactory account of the late events at the castle, in consequence of which the marchioness was confirmed in her rank, and Ferdinand was received as the sixth marquis de Mazzini.

The marchioness, thus restored to the world, and to happiness, resided with her children in the palace at Naples, where, after time had somewhat

mellowed the remembrance of the late calamity, the nuptials of Hippolitus and Julia were celebrated. The recollection of the difficulties they had encountered, and of the distress they had endured for each other, now served only to heighten by contrast the happiness of the present period.

Ferdinand soon after accepted a command in the Neapolitan army; and amidst the many heroes of that warlike and turbulent age, distinguished himself for his valour and ability. The occupations of war engaged his mind, while his heart was solicitous in promoting the happiness of his family.

Madame de Menon, whose generous attachment to the marchioness had been fully proved, found in the restoration of her friend a living witness of her marriage, and thus recovered those estates which had been unjustly withheld from her. But the marchioness and her family, grateful to her friendship, and attached

tached to her virtues, prevailed upon her to spend the remainder of her life at the palace of Mazzini.

Emilia, wholly attached to her family, continued to reside with the marchioness, who saw her race renewed in the children of Hippolitus and Julia. Thus surrounded by her children and friends, and engaged in forming the minds of the infant generation, she seemed to forget that she had ever been otherwise than happy.

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Here the manuscript annals conclude. In reviewing this story, we perceive a singular and striking instance of moral retribution. We learn also, that those who do only **THAT WHICH IS RIGHT**, endure nothing in misfortune but a trial of their virtue, and from trials well endured, derive the surest claim to the protection of heaven.

**F I N I S.**





